



WASHOE TRIBE
OF NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT
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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

DATE Jan. 9, 2008 TIME 2:30 PM P.S.T.

TO	<u>Francisco Vega</u>
FAX NUMBER	<u>775-687-6396</u>
FROM	<u>Mistia Mullins</u>
SUBJECT	<u>Comment letter on the intent to issue an operating permit to Sierra Pacific Resources Company to construct a Class I coal energy facility.</u>

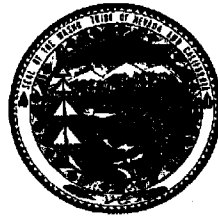
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Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Environmental Protection Department



Francisco Vega
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Air Pollution Control
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 4001
Carson City, NV 89701-5249

January 9, 2007

Mr. Vega:

The Washoe Tribe's Environmental Protection Department (WEPD) strongly opposes the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection's intent to issue an operating permit to Sierra Pacific Resources Company for construction of a Class I facility. The general outlook of WEPD is that we should leave the smallest footprint on Earth that we can. Coal has a tremendous impact on the Earth through the mining process, transportation to the plant, and emissions. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, coal-fired power plants account for almost 40% of human-caused mercury emissions — the nation's largest source — and are among the largest sources of particulate matter. The 220 pounds of mercury and 1,788 tons of particulate matter, and 4,628 pounds of sulfur dioxide the plant could emit each year outweigh any economic benefits it might bring.

Mercury is a significant concern in both Nevada and Utah, and Nevada already contributes significantly to mercury emissions from its coal mining operations. Mercury is of great concern because it is a neurotoxin that accumulates in the environment. Mercury has shown to have significant effects on human health. WEPD would like NDEP to outline a plan for releasing zero mercury emissions into the environment.

Sulfur dioxide quickly becomes sulfuric acid when released into the environment. This is of great concern when it becomes concentrated in surface and ground water

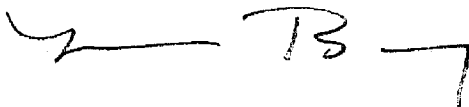
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systems because it can become incredibly toxic. Therefore, NDEP not only needs to address this operating permit from a water quality perspective as well as an air quality perspective. NDEP should consider who will be monitoring the water quality downwind of the coal plants. WEPD is particularly concerned with the impacts it will have on the Goshute and Paiute Indian Reservations, which lie downwind of the coal plant. In addition, the Green and Colorado Rivers can also be impacted by the pollution, which ultimately provides drinking water for millions of people in Las Vegas as well as California and Arizona. NDEP needs to adequately research the impact it will have on these populations and environments before issuing this permit.

Carbon dioxide is the major contributor of climate change. With this concern, Nevada needs to seriously consider renewable energy because it is much kinder to the Earth and helps reduce our carbon footprint rather than add to it. WEPD is aware that Nevada's population grew at a rate of 2.9 percent between July of 2006 and July 2007, and the growth is expected to continue. WEPD also understands that a growing population means a growing demand for energy. Fortunately, Nevada has abundant solar, wind, geothermal and biofuel resources that should be fully explored before resorting to coal. If the same investment was to be made in alternative energy that has been made in coal, we would have the same success for a longer period of time. NDEP needs to put limits on carbon dioxide emissions if it has not already done so.

If NDEP makes the unfortunate decision to issue this permit, it must require Sierra Pacific to use the best available pollution controls, as required by a 1990 amendment to the Clean Air Act. NDEP must require them to use the scrubbers that can capture more than 90% of emissions, which is the best technology available. Overall, the Washoe Tribe highly recommends that NDEP consult with more people before allowing this operating permit. Please contact Mistia Mullins at 775-265-8691 or mistia.mullins@washoetribe.us if you have any questions regarding these concerns.

Sincerely,



Marie Barry, Director
Environmental Protection Department
Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Cc: Mistia Mullins

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