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March 26, 2003

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The purpose of this correspondence is to petition the Environmental Protection Agency under the provisions of 40 CRF part 70.8 (d) to object to Permit Number V95-008, Significant Permit Revision S01-014 (San Tan Generating Station). I feel that there were issues that I raised during the public comment period that were not properly addressed in the responses to public comment. (I have included two letters submitted to MCDEQ during the public comment period as reference)

The current San Tan generating station is in Gilbert Arizona. Gilbert is located in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The permits allows Salt River Project to add three units totaling 825 megawatts of generation and expands the plant from a peak or intermediate demand facility to a base load facility.

First, some background on what is going on. The plant was originally used as a peak demand plant. I believe it was officially permitted as a peak or intermediate demand plant and was used only during peak demand hours, mostly on hot summer days. While it was thus employed, residential development was allow in the 1-mile radius surrounding the plant. Thousands of people moved in under the belief that this plant only operated when extra power was needed on hot summer days. The map submitted by SRP as part of their air quality analysis was outdated and showed as farmland what is now several new subdivisions. Maricopa County has a problem in the winter with inversions that trap pollutants near the ground. This expansion increases wintertime pollution, as it will be used year round rather than mostly in the summer.

Maricopa County Environmental Services Department responded to several comments by the EPA and others by commenting that items of concern were allowed by the EPA in other facilities in Maricopa County. [MCESD Responses to Comments on Proposed Significant Revision S01-014: Response 1d (ammonia slip level of 10ppm being higher than the state of the art level of 2ppm), Response 1i (VOC startup limit), Response 7a (road paving allowed as offset for PM10), Response 8d (SCR technology)]. This proposed expansion by adding three units totaling 825 megawatts is unlike any other in Maricopa County. It is the only one in a residential area with thousands of people

living within a mile of the plant. It poses unique public health and safety challenges because of its location.

Salt River Project's analysis of alternate sites was very general and did not include social and environmental costs. It focused on monetary cost to SRP. No studies were seriously done showing that the benefits of this plant outweighed the social and environmental costs of this plant versus other sites, size, or control technologies. [USC Title 42, chapter 85, subchapter 1, Part D, Subpart 1, Sec. 7503 (a)(5)] (Since the original study Arizona has built several new plants and has a glut of power.) SRP did not want to seriously consider other options and none were seriously studied. The possibility of disasters cause by hazardous materials being stored so near residential areas was also not figured into the benefits vs. social and environmental cost analysis. The affect of the air pollution on the health of individuals with asthma or cardiovascular illness was not figured into the cost. [Comment 10f] Not all costs are monetary. Environmental experts at Arizona State University presented evidence to reduce the size of a similar plant proposed for Tempe, Arizona where ASU is located (Kyrene Expansion Project, Permit Number V95-009.) (Tempe also had a former attorney general living in their town batting for them.) As part of an agreement to build a much smaller plant there, the people involved in the negotiations with Tempe agreed not to talk to people in Gilbert. No studies were done on benefits of alternate sizes or control technologies vs. the social and environmental cost of building this facility in a residential area of Gilbert. SRP would not even consider requests by COST (Citizens Opposing San Tan, a group formed by neighbors of the proposed expansion) to consider building only one unit and reducing to negligible the usage of the old plant. This was the agreement that was reached with Tempe.

Residents fought long and hard to get the Power Plant and Line Siting Committee of the Arizona Corporation Commission to not issue a certificate of environmental compatibility. (Obtaining a copy of the transcripts of that hearing from Maricopa County would give further insight into concerns the public has with this plant and the circumstances surrounding the issuance of the certificate. Residents who could not afford a lawyer faced a team of lawyers from SRP. The decision was in no way unanimous and the vote was confusing with several abstentions.) Salt River Project is a very powerful entity in the state. They have an employee on the Gilbert town council and former employees working for the Corporation Commission. We could not even get an environmental lawyer in this area to help us even if we had had the funds to hire one. We were warned that we had no chance of fighting SRP in Arizona as they were so powerful and had so much political clout. That's why I am asking that you take a careful look at this permit. Some residents near the expansion have not been able to sell their homes for enough to pay off their mortgages. Essentially, they are stuck next to the 825-megawatt expansion. The property on which the plant sits, until last year, was zoned agriculture and surrounded by residential and neighborhood commercial zoning. No industrial zoning existed in the area.

One specific concern I mentioned in the public comment period is that SRP will not agree to limit start-ups and shutdowns [see comment 1j]. Even though these may be included in the overall yearly total emissions as Maricopa County suggests, they still will significantly increase emissions over short periods of time. Even small increases of carbon monoxide over a short period of time have been shown to increase hospital admissions in asthma sufferers. In fact, the elementary school approximately one half mile from the plant has been said to have the most asthmatic children of any school in the county. Within a mile of the plant there are three elementary schools. At least 10 schools (elementary, junior high, high school, and charter schools.) are located within a two-mile radius of the plant. (This does not include pre-school and day care facilities.)

The permit condition 19.A.2-Table 4 allows 227.1 lb/hr of NOX, 760 lb/hr of CO, and 94.3 lb/hr. of VOC. I contend that there should be a limit on start-ups and shutdowns. The air quality analysis done by Dames and Moore and commissioned by SRP estimates 450 to 600 startups per year could occur. These should be limited as they are allowed to exceed the normally allowable concentration of pollutants during start-ups and shutdowns. SRP told the Arizona Corporation Commission they couldn't limit start-ups when they tried to impose a limit. Because of the exception for normally allowable emissions granted for start-ups and shut downs, they should be limited. The permitting authority, Maricopa County Department of Environmental Services responded that the applicant said that the start-ups and shut downs were included in the yearly emissions total. I do not feel that is sufficient. The effect of the short-term increase of carbon monoxide and other emissions is a serious health concern that should be overlooked.

Another concern is the monitoring of emissions. In our dealings with Salt River Project, we have found that they will try to get away with whatever they can. It didn't matter to them that many neighborhoods were upset about them building this plant. They brought out their team of lawyers to push for whatever they could legally get. We have not seen one thread of empathy for the neighbors of this plant or willingness to make any compromises. To have them monitor themselves seems like the fox guarding the chicken coop. Also, since natural gas doesn't really have a lot of opacity, there should be a station nearby to monitor for toxic or other hazardous elements of the emissions that is run by someone other than SRP. The information should be available to the public immediately via internet or other means. Penalties should include inability to use the facility. A monetary penalty, unless it is huge, would not be a sufficient deterrent for a company with SRP's wealth.

Another concern is the offsets. While paving roads will eliminate PM10, natural gas contains more toxic elements than dust does. [Comment 7a] It also contains more fine particles or PM2.5. Developers are required already to pave roads near their new developments by the Town of Gilbert, so road in the area are being paved regardless of the offset requirements. Also, the existing plant is one of the biggest stationary sources of pollution in the valley, including PM 10 and PM 2.5. It would be much more beneficial to the health of plant neighbors to get offsets by limiting usage of the original plant. SRP was also allowed to apply offsets from the Kyrene plant in Tempe to the San Tan plant. The Kyrene plant is over 12 miles away. This is totally unfair to citizens of

Gilbert. (The agreement with Kyrene neighbors limited the usage of the existing plant to 1% capacity and built only one new 275 megawatt generating station.) This does not help residents around the plant breathe healthy air. Why should SRP be allowed to pave road to get offsets near the plant when they can get PM10 offsets by not using their old plant, the biggest PM2.5 polluter in the area? (The existing plant put out 87,389 lb of PM10 in 2000.) Not using the old plant or being required to limit it to 1% usage would make a real difference, not just produce numbers on paper. [See comment 7c, response 7c]. SRP has a facility on site they can close down or limit usage of to produce offsets on-site. Their claim they cannot find a facility willing to generate significant reductions in particular emissions overlooks their own huge polluter already on the site.

If the plant had been operating as it was originally operating as a peak demand plant, they could not have gotten the NOX offset from retrofitting the plant or shown that it was not a significant increase in emissions. After plans for the expansion were begun, the plant began operating at an increased level. According to neighbors, it appears to have been operating at full capacity for two or three years prior to the permit to operate at base load capacity was approved. I was surprised to learn from Region 9 EPA that the new permit modification issued changes the permit to a base load plant. I was not aware of this until the permit had been approved by Maricopa County. We were not informed of this through the hearing process. If calculations of significant increase were based on usage, which was not permitted, should they be valid? I submit that usage of the plant at base load capacity should not be allowed to be used to determine allowable emissions. (MCDEQ did not respond to my original comment on calculations based on this increased usage versus historic usage.) For example, in 1993 the existing plant put out 521 tons of NOX and 130 tons of CO. In 2000, the existing plant put out 2,151 tons of NOX and 526 tons of CO.

The ammonia used by the plant should be a concern with so many people living nearby. In fact the nearest residence is only 850 feet from the newly permitted generating units, with others in the same subdivision are not much farther away. The most advanced technology resulting in the least ammonia slip should be required to be used. Even then the transportation and storage of ammonia so close to residences is a hazard. A 5,500,000 gallon distillate fuel tank will be on the premises. [Comment 8d] The chemicals stored on the plant would be a hazard in event of a terrorist attack. Evacuation of several thousand people and several schools could not be accomplished in time. MCDEQ responded that they have no jurisdiction over these types of hazards. [Response 8d, Response 10h] However, I submit that these hazards should be included in the analysis of whether the benefits of this site outweigh the social and environmental cost and be part of the basis for approving or denying the permit. [USC Title 42, Chap 85, Subchapter 1, Part D, Subpart 1, Section 7503 (a)(5)]

The effects of inversion need to be studied more. Since the plant began operation full time in winter, there is always a haze over the area that did not exist before. The Phoenix area has a bad inversion problem in wintertime. Upper air movement data from Tucson, AZ was used. [Comment 3g]. The study basically consisted of those wind rose charts and nothing else. Tucson is approximately 95 miles away, a higher elevation, and

topographically much different from the valley where the Phoenix metropolitan area is located. It is also generally more windy. Data is now available from Tempe (also in Eastern Maricopa County), which would much more accurately reflect conditions in Gilbert. Gilbert is in an area where the landscape slopes to its lowest area in the eastern part of the Phoenix metro area. The pollution does not disperse well during the winter. Most days are very calm with little or no wind. When approaching the plant from a neighboring town on calm winter days this year, a light brown haze was clearly visible over the area surrounding the plant most of the winter. It became denser closer to the plant. Being a family with asthmatic problems, we moved several miles away a little over a year ago. Since moving we have had hardly any problems with asthma. Over 100,000 people still live in Gilbert. They can't all just vacate the town. A detailed study of the effects of inversion and the problems in this particular area was not done. Converting the plant from mainly summer usage to year round should require inversions and their effects to be figured in.

According to Region 9 EPA this permit was originally issued on February 12, 2003. The public did not receive a response to their comments until March 12. (The cover letter was dated March 7.) We were told that the permit would not be issued until we received a response to our comments. After the public brought this to MCDEQ's attention they changed the date of the permit issuance on their website (www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/pwrplnt.asp) although the actual permit is still dated February 10. This effectively gives the public less time to appeal responses to their comments. As an attachment to this letter I have included my original comments submitted to MCDEQ as a reference as not all were included in entirety in the responses to public comments issued by MCDEQ. As I had only a couple weeks after becoming aware of the public comment period last fall to formulate my comments, I have tried to add more clarification as well as objecting to some of MCDEQ's responses to comments. The public became aware of the public hearing in October via newspaper only about a week in advance. (40 CFR part 70.7(h) (4) requires 30 days notice of public hearing.) A matter of such complexity requires time for citizens to review details and prepare comments.

Hopefully, the permit will be denied, but if it is not I hope there can be a limit on start-ups and shut downs and a reliable way to monitor for toxic and hazardous air pollutants that will protect the public health. I hope that the existing plant will be limited in usage or shut to provide offsets that genuinely benefit people near the plant. I hope ammonia usage and the issue of the benefits of a plant this size and in this location significantly outweighing social and environmental costs will be looked at. Also, I hope that the winter inversion problem in the area will be studied more accurately and taken into consideration, as well as the history of the plant as a peak demand plant when subdivisions were built around it. I hope that calculations based on usage that was not permitted under the original permit will not be allowed in determining significant impact. I hope this will not be allowed to become a base load plant contributing to our wintertime inversion and pollution problems.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

L. Suzanne Pager

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Rob Arpino
Air Quality Division
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1001 N. Central Ave., Ste. 595
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Dear Mr. Arpino,

I have a few more concerns I would like to address in addition to the letter I originally sent. One concern is the monitoring requirements which require the permittee to observe visible emissions and keep a log. I am concerned with trusting SRP to provide this monitering solely by themselves. It would be helpful if the county could make surprise inspections once in a while and also allow nearby residents to report any visible emissions as part of the requirements. Also, other parties should be allowed to monitor pollution such as particulates and ozone and submit results for evidence of violations if they so choose. I would urge the strictest possible oversight because of the location and great possibility of human health consequences.

Also, the construction of a plant of this magnitude will cause noise and dust and other pollution such as diesel truck emission. Construction could take a couple of years and this seems like an excessive burden on the thousands of homeowners in the area. Do the dust control plan rules apply to construction as well as operation? I think there should not be exceptions from normal standards allowed for construction due to the long time period and number of people affected. If a separate construction permit is not issued, there should be more restrictions related specifically to construction. Construction should not be allowed to proceed if restrictions are violated. Because of SRP's wealth, a halting of operations as well as a fine would be a better penalty and deterent for violations both in construction and operation.

Also, I noticed that a 5,500,000 gallon distillate fuel oil storage tank is included in the equipment list. This is a lot of oil to be stored near homes and neighborhood businesses. This could be very hazardous. Transporting ammonia through neighborhoods could also be hazardous. The planned expansion plant is only 850 feet away from the nearest home and subdivision.

Also, it appears they are using technology which includes ammonia, which could pose a hazard to the surrounding area.

Also, because exemptions are made for CO2 concentrations for start-ups, and there are a very large number of start-ups proposed, I feel this will be dangerous to the health of asthmatics and heart patients. The Corporation Commission tried to get them to agree to limit the number of start-ups, but they refused. They estimate 450 and 600 start-ups per year could occur. If they cannot limit these start-ups other than by building a smaller capacity expansion, they should have to do so. They did not study the effects of different size expansions.

I also believe data from the Tucson area was used for upper air movement. Data from Tempe would be more accurate. The inversion effects were not mentioned. This underestimates the amount of pollution near the plant as the pollutants bounce off the cap formed by the inversion and hit the ground in higher concentrations near the plant. The area around the plant is also a low-lying area of land. The effects of inversion should be studied.

Another point of concern is the fact that SRP reports the expansion would generate 24.10 tons of Hazardous Air Pollutants. This is just under the threshold of 25. Having attended much of the Power Plant and Line Siting Committee Hearing I felt that Salt River Project was not forthcoming with all information requested of them. They seemed to have an end justifies the means mentality. For this reason, a number that comes in just below the allowable limit to avoid modeling should be suspect. In addition, these 24.1 tons will be added to the HAPs emitted by the existing facility to exceed the threshold of 25. This is cause for concern for those living near the power plant.

I am a concerned mother of an asthmatic child. We have recently moved because of this proposed expansion, but many other asthmatic children still live nearby. I would ask that you consider the consequences on the lives of thousands of children and adults living nearby as you make decisions regarding the permitting of this expansion.

Sincerely,

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Mesa, Arizona 85205

Rob Arpino
Maricopa County Environmental Services Department
Air Quality Division
1001 N. Central, Ste. 200
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Dear Mr. Arpino,

I have some concerns about the San Tan Expansion Project. First of all, this plant would be in a heavily populated area. Ammonia and fuel oil would be transported to and stored at the plant, a potential hazard to nearby residents. There is an elementary school ½ mile away, and at least one other elementary and high school within a mile. Also, there would be many start-ups resulting in high concentrations of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide increase, even slight, has been shown to result in increased hospital admissions among asthmatic patients. It is also harmful to the elderly and those with heart conditions.

Also of concern is the lack of serious consideration of other sites. This site was the preferred site from the start because of more profit for SRP. Other sites were only given lip service and a casual rating. There were no studies with hard data. Numbers were only guesstimates. Before placing this in a very populated area, serious consideration should be given to other sites and serious studies conducted producing hard data. There are other alternatives.

The road to be paved as offsets are mainly far from the site. While beneficial to residents in Apache Junction and south Chandler, Gilbert residents near the site will bear the burden of increased PM10 emissions. Also, the emissions from the plant will be PM2.5, which has been shown to be more harmful to humans and be more implicated in premature death than PM10. The PM2.5 emissions from the plant would also contain more hazardous chemicals than dust does.

This expansion is proposed in a neighborhood where thousands of children live. This plant originally was used for peak demand electric generation. Since the expansion has been planned, plant usage has increased. As SRP increases usage, the percentage of new pollutions the expansion would add goes down, thus enabling them to build a bigger expansion. SRP has the ability to manipulate in this way if they choose. If historic usage is considered, the new expansion adds a much greater percentage of pollutants to the air. This plant will pollute a lot more than it did when many of the people originally purchased their homes in the area. The plant was mostly used in the summer then and not subject to inversions as it is in the winter. The effect of inversions should also be considered as it was not mentioned in their original study.

A plant of this magnitude should not be placed in a residential area. If you have any doubts about if this is a residential area, I would suggest you visit the area. It poses too many hazards to residents. The closest home is only 850 feet away from the proposed expansion plant building itself and across the street from the plant property. I hope this plant will not be permitted.

Sincerely,

L. Suzanne Pager