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## Energy Commission comes to Oakley

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by Samie Hartley

11.12.09 - 04:43 pm



More than 100 Oakley residents came out to support the proposed Oakley Generating Station during the California Energy Commission's first visit to the city this week.

Commission Vice Chairman James Boyd, who presided over the event, said he was impressed with Monday's turnout for the informational hearing

that followed a site tour in which approximately 60 people visited the location of the proposed power plant. If approved, the plant will be built on 22 acres of the former DuPont property on Bridgehead Road.

District V Supervisor Federal Glover said it was good to see so many people interested in the project, especially since the project has the potential to create new jobs that will benefit many of Oakley's residents: "This project will allow us the opportunity to put people who are not working to work with local hire. It will give us the opportunity to reach a lot of the economic demands within the community, and it's going to put a lot of labor folks to work in terms of construction of the site, so we really have a jewel here."

Radback Energy Senior Vice President and Project Manager Greg Lamberg said if the project is approved, more than 700 union labor jobs would be created during the three-year construction period, which will be a "huge shot of adrenaline to the economy," as \$4 million in supplies will be purchased locally and \$6 million is projected to be generated in sales tax revenue. The plant will also generate up to \$10 million in property taxes each year, creating funds to be used to benefit local services such as police and fire protection, street maintenance and schools.

Steven Nosanchuck, president of the Oakley Chamber of Commerce, said the financial gains for the community are greatly needed. "It's important to me to see Oakley thrive again. Like most communities in our country, Oakley has been hit hard by the current economic crisis. The power plant being discussed brings jobs to Oakley and much-needed revenue to our city coffers. We're a small city. To be discussing property tax revenue in the ballpark of \$10 million a year is very encouraging. It makes me much more hopeful about the economic future of our city."

More than 20 residents spoke in favor of the project, citing creation of jobs as the most significant benefit.

"There's no question times are hard for most folks," said Michael Hernandez. "During this economic crisis, with so many jobs that have been lost across California, the Oakley Generating Station will offer some relief."

Marco Gonzalez, representing a local labor union, said it's important to hire locally for the project and hopes there will be official documentation that stipulates local hiring.

Nosanchuck also stressed the need for local hiring for this project, which Lamberg said is a priority. In an interview with the Press last week, Lamberg said as part of conditions for certification in the final permit, Radback will first look to employ Oakley and far East County workers before expanding its search to the rest of the county and beyond.

During the public comments portion of the hearing, several residents expressed concern about pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The Energy Commission's Staff Issues Identification Report also asked for more studies to be conducted regarding air quality and noise pollution. Environmental impacts found to be significant must be mitigated for the project to move forward, and representatives from Radback Energy said they would work with staff to address all concerns as needed.

The informational hearing is just one step in a 16-month process in which the commission will conduct an analysis to determine whether or not the proposed project is viable. The commission is expected to make its decision by March, 2011. If approved, Radback anticipates beginning construction in May, 2011, and completing the project by the end of 2013, at which time PG&E will take over operation of the plant.

The proposed Oakley Generating Station is designed to be a 620-megawatt, state-of-the-art natural-gas-fired, combined-cycle generating facility supplying power to 600,000 households. The plant will also use General Electric's latest technology, the 7FA Fleet, which employs faster starts, greater turndown, lower emissions and higher efficiency. The Oakley Generating Station would be the first in the world to use this new technology.

For more information about the project, visit [www.radback.com/CCGSLLC.html](http://www.radback.com/CCGSLLC.html). To join the e-mail list for updates, visit [www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/contracosta/index.html](http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/contracosta/index.html).

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