

## **REJECTED: TWO SDG&E DIRTY ENERGY POWER PLANTS DENIED BY STATE – FOR NOW**

*California Public Utilities Commission takes one step forward, but will they take two steps back? EHC vows to continue to fight on for a clean energy future*

SAN DIEGO, March 21, 2013 - Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), an organization that fights toxic pollution, commends the California Public Utilities Commission decision to deny the highly controversial proposed Pio Pico and Quail Brush power plants today. The vote was unanimous. EHC agrees with the commissioners' comments that San Diego must lessen its energy demand in the next three years so that new gas plants aren't needed. EHC urges San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) to work with the community to reduce energy demand in lieu of reapplying to build more dirty power plants.

"We were able to temporarily stave off the construction of the dirty power plants, which is a victory for clean air and clean energy," said Nicole Capretz, Green Energy-Green Jobs Director at Environmental Health Coalition. "But, the victory may be short-lived if SDG&E reapplies for permits rather than focusing on building a new modern energy grid based on efficiency and renewables."

EHC is pursuing a transformation of the electricity market to focus on a decentralized, [small-scale energy system](#) built close to load centers and centered on reducing energy demand, while also creating local [green jobs](#), supporting small business, mitigating the devastating impacts of climate change and making our grid more secure and reliable.

"Climate change is going to hit low-income communities first and worst. We must stop building more [fossil fuel plants](#) that will expedite the perilous impacts of climate change and instead work to help protect our most vulnerable populations. Now is the time for a paradigm shift," said Capretz.

Although the Commission decision approved the repower of the small Escondido Repower Facility, it denied San Diego Gas and Electric's (SDG&E) authority to enter into contracts to buy power from the new and larger open-space plants Pio Pico Energy Center and Quail Brush Power until at least 2018.

Combined, the two fossil fuel plants would have increased power plant emissions by over 32 percent and overall greenhouse emissions by 2.3 percent in San Diego County. These are the equivalent of adding almost 160,000 additional vehicles to San Diego's roads each year. In contrast, local climate mitigation and adaptation planning efforts are working to reduce greenhouse emissions by about 15 percent by 2020 to meet statewide goals.

Quail Brush alone would have emitted 201,587 metric tons of climate-causing greenhouse gas emissions a year and doubled the amount of fine particulate matter in the air. It was proposed in a designated open space area adjacent to Mission Trail Regional Park and upwind of an elementary school and residential area. Pio Pico was a 340 MW unit proposed in open space in Otay Mesa, and would have emitted 623,299 tons of greenhouse gases a year.

For more information on how dirty energy affects low-income communities, visit [www.environmentalhealth.org](http://www.environmentalhealth.org).

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION: Founded in 1980, Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) builds grassroots campaigns to confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use, and unsustainable energy policies. Visit us online at <http://www.environmentalhealth.org/>.