

## California Public Utilities Commission approves Otay Mesa Pio Pico Energy Center



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OTAY MESA - The California Public Utilities Commission on Wednesday unanimously voted to approve the controversial Pio Pico Energy Center despite hearing pleas from several San Diegans who made it to San Francisco for the meeting.

Supporters of the plant say the natural gas-powered energy station is needed especially after the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station ceased operations last year. However, opponents argue the plant goes against California's clean air goals.

"I'm really disappointed that the community's voice wasn't heard," said Franco Garcia, who is with the

Environmental Health Coalition.

Garcia says the plant will cost San Diegans \$1.6 billion during its first 25 years. It is extra disappointing to him especially when the state says it is pushing greener energies.

"Unnecessary, it's a polluting power plant," he said. "It's going to cost money."

For environmentalists, what the plant would be putting into the air concerns them.

"So basically what you're doing is you're adding more pollution into an already polluted area," said Garcia. "It sends us completely down the wrong path."

The CPUC originally rejected plans for Pio Pico in March of 2013, which would be located near the Otay Mesa Energy Center. The unexpected closure of San Onofre forced San Diego Gas & Electric to reapply.

Garcia is afraid Pio Pico will be the first to use the old nuclear power plant as an excuse.

"More and more of these power plants, using San Onofre as their jumping off point," he said.

Environmentalists were hoping the state would instead focus on solar and wind. A third of the state's energy must be from renewable resources by 2020.

Garcia says Pio Pico is a step in the wrong direction and they will continue to fight it.

"It's not over," he said.

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