

# NRG's Misinformation Campaign

## *NRG Twists the Truth to Build Its Case*

NRG West has been publishing and mailing out a missive, "Carlsbad Energy Center Powering California with NRG," that includes many misleading statements and manipulation of information.

In several issues of the newsletter, NRG proclaims its plans for additional power units at the Encina Power Station will lead to such environmental benefits as a "lower carbon footprint" and "enhanced local air quality." The facts show a very different story. The carbon footprint in our community will increase dramatically if the Encina units are "replaced" with the new Carlsbad Energy Center Project (CECP). The proposed plant may have a lower carbon footprint per megawatt hour, but since the new units will be producing vastly more megawatt hours than the old units, the carbon footprint will actually increase. As for "enhanced local air quality," air pollution emissions will increase.

In another issue, NRG West claims "the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) staff did not have concerns or issues regarding greenhouse gas emissions as they relate to the Carlsbad Energy Center Project." In truth, neither the APCD nor the CEC currently have any regulations at all concerning greenhouse gas emissions. The public is erroneously led to think that the CECP is following imaginary guidelines.

Another big concern about the proposed new facility is the negative visual impact of having such a huge new plant looming over the freeway. NRG West's visual impact statement maintains, "The new power plant... will be concealed by foliage and terrain west of the I-5 freeway." But according to a May 2009 letter from Allan Kosup, I-5 corridor director for the state Department of Transportation (Caltrans), all of the existing terrain and foliage will be eliminated during an upcoming widening of the I-5 freeway.

NRG also claims to be working closely with Caltrans "on this important matter and will determine viable solutions to maintain appropriate barriers, including trees and berms between the project and I-5 for safety and visual screening." But according to Kosup's letter, Caltrans has no dialog with NRG and, in fact, has yet to receive a response to a request for more information that was made back in February 2009.

NRG also says it is "committed to continuing to work with the City Fire Marshal and Fire Department to ensure that the CECP meets all fire code and emergency response requirements." And yet in a letter dated April 28, 2009, Carlsbad Fire Chief Kevin Crawford complains about a "lack of accurate information" about the proposed new facility and warns his department's ability to respond to any potential emergency could be severely hampered.

NRG also is perpetuating the erroneous notion that the new plant will replace the old plant. “By phasing out the existing power plant, the City of Carlsbad will be able to eventually meet its goal of using the site for community and commercial development,” one NRG missive said. In truth, however, there are no plans to remove the old plant once the new one is built. Carlsbad will be stuck with two smoke-spewing power plants, maybe more, at least for the foreseeable future.

NRG also is fueling the perception that locally generated power will stay in Carlsbad. In one issue of its newsletter the company proclaimed, “NRG remains committed to bringing this important energy project online to meet the needs of the region.” And yet there is no guarantee that even if Carlsbad did need the power—and we maintain it doesn’t—it would stay in the region. NRG has no contract with SDG&E, so its power can be sold on the open market. So conceivably, Carlsbad would get the smokestack, and the pollution, while Los Angeles or some other California city would get the locally generated power.