



# LandWatch

monterey county

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May 29, 2002

Thom McCue  
Planning and Building Inspection Department  
2620 First Avenue  
Marina, CA 93933

[Sent By US Postal Mail and FAX – 831-755-6487]

RE: Proposed Negative Declaration for the Pajaro Valley Energy Center

Dear Thom McCue:

Thank you for making available your Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for the above noted project, along with the associated Initial Study.

This letter is to object to the issuance of a Negative Declaration for the proposed project. I also request that you promptly notify me of any further decisions made in connection with the proposed project, specifically including the issuance of a Negative Declaration.

As you know, the California Environmental Quality Act requires a public agency to prepare a full Environmental Impact Report prior to making any decision that might have a substantial negative impact on the environment. This proposed project certainly qualifies.

As described in the materials I have reviewed, the proposed project would:

1. Convert a property that has previously served the agricultural industry into an energy facility, thus removing it from potential future use for an agricultural business.
2. Result in the construction of an 80-foot high exhaust stack in an area that Monterey County has designated in its Draft General Plan Update (GPU), now under review, as an area for future residential and associated urban development.
3. Directly impact a lower income community, and people of color, who reside in the project area, and expose them to increased air pollution.
4. Preclude, at least potentially, the conversion of the property on which the project is proposed, and surrounding properties, to uses more compatible with the urban growth designation contained in the Draft GPU.
5. Create an aesthetically unattractive development on the property, again potentially precluding the future development of surrounding properties in the way generally designated in the Draft GPU.

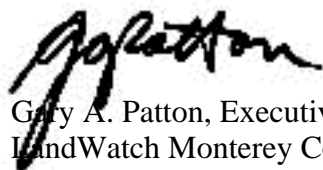
6. Locate an energy facility in an area likely to suffer flooding.
7. Create a facility with significant potential to create noise conditions that will make it difficult or impossible to use the surrounding properties for the residential and urban growth purposes specified in the Draft GPU.
8. Potentially affect agricultural operations, as new power lines are constructed over commercially productive fields (Page 14 of Initial Study).
9. Potentially affect population and housing (contrary to the statement on Page 14 of the Initial Study) because it may preclude the urban redevelopment of the site and surrounding properties.
10. Create visual impacts by requiring the erection of pole lines in places where such lines do not exist.
11. Result in the continuous storage of extremely hazardous materials (aqueous ammonia) on site, posing a potential danger to surrounding residential areas, and possibly precluding, as a practical matter, the redevelopment and urban reuse of the site and surrounding properties as currently proposed in the Draft GPU.
12. Require up to 79,000 gallons of water per day from an underground aquifer that is presently in a state of severe overdraft.

LandWatch works on land use policy issues. Our concern is not only with the direct impacts of the proposed project—which appear considerable—but also in the possibly adverse impact of the proposed project on the future redevelopment of the Pajaro area. This area is within a county redevelopment agency, and a full "community plan" is scheduled to be prepared for this area in the near future. In addition, the Draft Monterey County General Plan Update designates the Pajaro Area as one of only four areas in the unincorporated county where new residential and other urban growth should be directed. The construction of a power plant with an eighty-foot high exhaust stack on the site could have a major impact on future uses of surrounding properties.

We strongly believe that CEQA requires a full Environmental Impact Report. Furthermore, as a matter of policy, LandWatch does not believe that the County of Monterey should make a decision on a project that could preclude many options for the future development of surrounding properties unless and until a community plan is adopted for the Pajaro Area, and it is clear, based on full environmental analysis, that the proposed energy facility will not adversely affect the achievement of this plan.

Thank you for taking our views into consideration. Again, please promptly notify me of any further decisions made in connection with the proposed project, specifically including the issuance of a Negative Declaration.

Very truly yours,



Gary A. Patton, Executive Director  
LandWatch Monterey County

cc: Redevelopment Agency  
Supervisor Lou Calcagno  
Action Pajaro Valley  
Planning and Conservation League  
Bill Yeates, Attorney at Law