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CITY ATTORNEY DELGADILLO, COUNCIL MEMBER HUIZAR ANNOUNCE EFFORT TO BLOCK PROPOSED POWER PLANT

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo today joined with City Council Member Jose Huizar (CD-14), Natural Resources Defense Council environmental justice attorney Tim Grabel and representatives of the Boyle Heights community to announce actions the City is taking to block construction of the Vernon Power Plant, as it is currently proposed, and to effectively mitigate – to the maximum extent possible – any harm, should a power plant proposal go forward. This plant is expected to cause significant harm to both the local environment and to the health of local residents.

“The City of Vernon has proposed building a power plant that will belch hundreds of thousands of pounds of dangerous pollutants into our air, and into the lungs of the men, women, and children who live, work, and play, here in this community – in Los Angeles,” said City Attorney Delgadillo.

City Attorney Delgadillo is requesting authorization, on behalf of the City of Los Angeles, to join the Natural Resources Defense Council in intervening in the California Energy Commission proceedings to block construction of the plant as currently proposed, in order to ensure that the proposed plant’s dangerous emissions are reduced and mitigated to the maximum extent possible.

“Council Member Huizar and I believe that as public officials, we have a moral obligation to do everything within our power to protect the health and welfare of our constituents. That’s why we are joining with this community to urge the California Energy Commission to block this plant from being built, as it is currently proposed. We are committed to doing everything we can for the children and families of this neighborhood and this City to ensure cleaner air today, and in the future,” Delgadillo added.

“I will not let the City of Vernon dictate the future health and well-being of the residents of Los Angeles. The City of Vernon has admitted that the power plant will produce toxic emissions that are associated with cancer, asthma and other respiratory diseases,” said Council Member Jose Huizar.

In accordance with a motion filed by Council Member Huizar on November 27, and after authorization by the City Council, the City of Los Angeles will take all necessary steps to block the development of the City of Vernon's proposed 943-megawatt power plant - due to the likelihood of increased adverse health impacts on children and families in Los Angeles resulting from the hundreds of thousands of pounds of harmful emissions this plant is expected to produce.

City Attorney Delgadillo added, "A 943 megawatt power plant would provide enough electricity to power 707,250 average homes. Why do the 91 residents of Vernon need a power plant huge enough to power more than 700,000 homes? And why should the 450,000 people in the surrounding communities of Boyle Heights, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Huntington Park, Bell, and Maywood have to suffer the adverse health effects of the hundreds of thousands of pounds of dangerous chemical pollutants produced by this monster power plant built to provide power to just 91 people?"

This week's action follows the application for certification to the California Energy Commission by the City of Vernon in June 2006 to build a 943 megawatt combined-cycle power generating facility. The proposed fossil fuel-fired power plant will generate more energy than required for the City of Vernon's power needs and will have a significant environmental impact, releasing more than 400,000 pounds of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides and more than 32,000 pounds of sulfur oxides when fully operational.

The plant's expected harmful emissions are associated with smog, global warming, cancer, asthma and other respiratory diseases. The South Coast Air Quality Management District has estimated that emissions from the proposed power plant will result in an increase in annual adult mortality of 4-12 persons in the region.

Further, prevailing winds are such that emissions from the power plant are very likely to blow toward the City of Los Angeles, into neighborhoods like Boyle Heights. Many neighborhoods in eastern and southern Los Angeles are already heavily impacted by pollution from industrial facilities, diesel trucks and other harmful emission sources.

"We are working with the Mothers of East L.A. and other community groups to ensure that they are not, once again, left bearing the brunt of decisions made elsewhere and that will not benefit the neighborhood and its people," added Natural Resources Defense Council's Tim Grabel.

"We are asking the City of Vernon to scrap its plans and give local residents – those most affected by this huge plant – a seat at the table and a voice in the process," concluded Delgadillo. "A child in Boyle Heights deserves the same shot at a safe and healthy life as a child in Beverly Hills."

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