



Environmentalists Announce Campaign Against Power Plant

By Suburban News

October 15, 2009, 2:10PM

LINDEN - A coalition of environmentalists announced today that they have formed the Arthur Kill Watershed Alliance with the goal of fighting a proposed mega coal plant in Linden.

Members of the Arthur Kill Watershed Alliance include the Tremley Point Alliance, the New Jersey Sierra Club, Edison Wetlands Association, New Jersey Environmental Federation, New Jersey Environmental Lobby and Environment New Jersey.

Linden City Council President Robert Bunk joined the alliance at a press conference at City Hall to announce his opposition to the proposal, a 500MW coal plant and carbon capture and sequestration pilot project that will threaten the health of city residents and the local environment.

The \$5 billion pilot project, called PurGen, would severely degrade the local environment and undermine Linden's attempts to revitalize the area. Furthermore, reliance on untested sequestration technology could jeopardize the state's attempts to mitigate global warming.

Carbon capture and sequestration is an unproven and untested technology. PurGen theorizes they can capture and liquefy carbon dioxide and push it 70 miles through an offshore pipeline to be buried under the seabed. The proposed location for this experiment is the former DuPont site along the Arthur Kill. The pipeline will run under Raritan Bay through the ocean to the shores off Atlantic City, where the carbon dioxide discharge site will be located in ocean rock deposits.

"I have considered the PurGen coal plant proposal but there are just too many unanswered questions," Linden City Council President Bunk said. "Throughout my service there have been proposals which promised more than was actually delivered to the city. The tax benefits to the city from this specific proposal are still not clear enough. A project which only offers job growth some five years down the road when balanced against the immediate tax and environmental concerns fails at this point. In my view, it has not demonstrated enough of the needed environmental safeguards to protect residents."

Jeff Tittel, New Jersey Sierra Club Director and Chairman of the Arthur Kill Watershed Alliance, said the plant would lead to environmental catastrophe and risk human health.

“This plant is a five billion dollar environmental Ponzi scheme that not only won’t work but will lead to environmental disaster,” Tittel said. “This is an unproven technology that will be an experiment not only for the environment but for the people of Linden.”

He said the alliance hopes to partner with groups and individuals that share similar concerns about the project.

In addition to the carbon dioxide risks, the PurGen plant could be expected to produce 450,000 pounds of arsenic, 480,000 pounds of toxic lead, 14 million pounds of barium, 900,000 pounds of chromium and 1.4 million pounds of manganese.

“As Vice Chair of the Arthur Kill Watershed Alliance, I concur with my fellow alliance members as to the dangers inherent in PurGen’s proposed experimental coal plant but as the Tremley Point Alliance’s representative, I have more of a ground zero view point and a long history with the polluting chemical plants that preceded and included DuPont,” said Beatrice Bernzott of the Tremley Point Alliance.

“Linden residents, especially those of Tremley, have been bombarded with explosions and threatened by tank farm fires. Our seniors are dying of cancer and asthma rates increasing in school children, due to these chemical plants,” Bernzott said. “These are some of the reasons the Tremley Point Alliance sought and was granted the status of an environmental justice city by the DEP and the reason we joined Arthur Kill Watershed Alliance to fight PurGen.”

“The concept of spending taxpayers’ money to use the residents of Linden as guinea pigs to test their experimental project is a serious environmental justice issue, and will potentially endanger the ocean’s fish and wildlife as well,” said Robert Spiegel, Executive Director of the Edison Wetlands Association. “This is a recipe for another Exxon-Valdez toxic catastrophe.”

“The worst polluters continue to put Linden in their cross-hairs but this time the stakes are even higher. This dirty plant is just as bad as all the past ones we defeated and it’s precedent-setting,” said Dave Pringle of New Jersey Environmental Federation. “Linden and everywhere else needs clean rateables, not cosmetically-altered coal.”

Mike Pisauo of the New Jersey Environmental Lobby said the plant would only hinder efforts to move towards renewable sources. “Approval of a new coal plant is against New Jersey’s commitment to renewable energy,” Pisauo said. “Even with carbon sequestration, which is unproven and inefficient, coal is dirty from its mining through its transportation and its use. Coal is looking back; we need to look forward.”

Matt Elliott, Clean Energy Advocate at Environment New Jersey, agreed. “We don’t need more dirty coal in New Jersey. We’ve got more solar and wind potential than we know what to do with. Let’s get working on renewable energy – forget coal once and for all – and finally start to clear our air and fight global warming,” Elliott concluded.

Tittel said the sequestration process itself consumes massive amounts of energy and suggested that tax subsidies go to fund renewable energy projects like wind and solar. “The \$5 billion could

be used to install solar panels on 175,000 residential roofs, creating 1,350 MW of electricity or it could be used to put up 450 offshore wind turbines producing 1,800 MW,” Tittel said.

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