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Media Contact: Nahal Mogharabi,
Mogharabi.Nahal@epa.gov

U.S. EPA Issues Permit to Palmdale Power Plant, Requires Limits for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Use of Innovative Solar Technology results in one of the Cleanest, Most Efficient Fossil Fuel Plants in Nation

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently issued a permit to the City of Palmdale, Calif. for the construction and operation of the Palmdale Hybrid Power Project. The 570 megawatt natural gas-fired power plant, with 50 megawatts of solar energy generation, is the first of its kind in the nation required to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Commercial operation is planned for the summer of 2013.

“Palmdale’s use of solar technology is a model for new electric power plants across the nation,” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest Region. “This hybrid design proves that plants can provide energy while having less impact on the environment.”

The permit sets limits for carbon dioxide emissions at 774 pounds per megawatt-hour of power produced, while the clean solar component can generate enough energy each hour to recharge about 750 electric vehicles.

“This is yet another milestone for a project that will not only benefit the residents of Palmdale and the Antelope Valley, but will also help the State of California meet its needs for clean, reliable energy,” said Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford. “The Palmdale Hybrid Power Plant, with its natural gas and solar components, will be the cleanest project of its kind in the world, create much needed jobs and help expedite the retirement of older, higher polluting plants.”

The Palmdale project, located in the desert of Antelope Valley, combines the use of natural gas-fired technology with that of solar, using mirrors to capture sunlight for conversion into electricity. The solar input will provide around 10% of the peak power generated by the plant during periods of highest energy demand. This innovative combination will result in one of the cleanest and most efficient fossil fuel-fired power plants in the nation.

The EPA issued the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) permit on October 18th based on the project's ability to meet Best Available Control Technology for greenhouse gases and other pollutants as well the projects demonstrated compliance with all applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the pollutants regulated under the permit.

The Clean Air Act requires a PSD permit for new and modified major sources of air pollution such as power plants, manufacturing facilities, and other facilities that emit air pollution. PSD permits apply to regulated pollutants that do not exceed the NAAQS in an area. The NAAQS establish maximum pollution concentration levels to protect public health from harmful levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, fine particulate, carbon monoxide, and lead.

In January 2011, the PSD program began covering new construction projects that emit at least 100,000 tons of GHG emissions per year, requiring the facility to install the Best Available Control Technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For more information on the PSD program please visit EPA's website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/permit/psd-public-part.html>

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