

Tell the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) not to build a fracked-gas power plant in the middle of the Ironbound!

Background: The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC), which is a state agency, wants to build a frack gas-fired power plant in the Ironbound (East Ward) of Newark, an Environmental Justice community with some of the worst air pollution in the country. This project is part of the PVSC's resiliency plan to build a backup power source to allow the existing PVSC facility to continue processing wastewater in times when the central electricity grid is down, like it was in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. While we support the goal of building resilient wastewater treatment systems, we simply can not achieve real resiliency by building new fossil fuel infrastructure. The emissions from a new fracked gas power plant would further exacerbate the climate crisis and lock us in to even more extreme weather events in the future. And it would increase the pollution burden in the Ironbound community, who already suffers from the deadly consequences of decades of environmental racism.

This proposed Standby Power Generation Facility for the PVSC Newark Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant would worsen smog pollution in an area that already has a failing grade from the American Lung Association for air quality. Communities of color are experiencing far higher infection and mortality rates from COVID-19, and one major reason is the deadly levels of air pollution that these communities face. Constructing another fossil fuel power plant in the Ironbound would repeat the historical pattern of placing unfair environmental burdens on communities of color. These plans directly contradict Governor Murphy's Executive Order 23 to promote Environmental Justice and the spirit of New Jersey's just passed landmark law to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable communities.

This project is proposing a new fracked-gas power plant with a stated goal of generating 34 MW of power. However, the overall capacity of the project will actually be 84 MW. According to the PVSC's calculations, even if the plant really only operates at 34 MW it will still emit the following every year:

- 100 tons CO₂
- 25 tons of NO_x
- 100 tons of particulate matter
- 25 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

The state could easily provide backup electricity for the wastewater treatment plant by building a renewable energy based Microgrid. They could use solar, tidal, hydro, or wind power as well as battery storage and flywheels to power the facility. A renewable energy

microgrid would be more resilient than building a fracked gas power plant because it would not be concentrated at a single point of failure for flooding or any other issue.

Dear Governor Murphy, PVSC Commissioners, NJDEP Commissioner LaTourette, and Elected Officials,

I am writing in opposition to Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's plans to build an 84 MW fracked gas power plant in the Ironbound community of Newark, an Environmental Justice community that is already one of the most heavily polluted areas in the country. This project is part of the PVSC's resiliency plan. Resiliency can not be achieved by building more fossil fuel infrastructure in a flood-prone area that is already overburdened by pollution.

This fracked-gas power plant will emit tons of pollutants into the community. According to the PVSC's calculations, even if the plant only operates at 34 MW it will emit 100 tons of CO₂, 25 tons of NO_x, 100 tons of particulate matter, 100 tons of SO₂, and 25 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) every year, each of which has serious health impacts. This is alarming because it would be located in an area that already has a failing grade from the American Lung Association for air quality.

Constructing this power plant is repeating the historical pattern of placing unfair environmental burdens on communities of color. The Ironbound community already suffers from air pollution generated from multiple power plants, an incinerator, industrial warehouses, toxic sites, truck routes, Newark airport, the Port of NY and NJ, and potentially a sludge incinerator. This project also directly contradicts Governor Murphy's executive order to promote Environmental Justice as well as the spirit of the Environmental Justice law, S232, that he signed last year.

I understand the importance for building resiliency in the face of climate change, but that means transitioning to renewable energy, not expanding the same dirty energy that makes our state more vulnerable to the climate crisis. I urge PVSC to use clean renewable energy alternatives for backup electricity generation. Tidal, hydro, or wind power as well as battery storage and flywheels can provide backup generation while protecting our communities from more toxic air pollution. Also, a renewable energy based microgrid would be more resilient than building a fossil fuel power plant because it would not be concentrated at a single point of failure for flooding or any other issue.

Building a power plant that is powered by fracked gas will send New Jersey backwards when it comes to Environmental Justice and climate change. It will increase our greenhouse gas emissions dramatically, and perpetuate our state's history of

environmental racism. I urge you to reject this environmental injustice and order PVSC to replace it with a renewable energy alternative to move New Jersey forward when it comes to protecting overburdened communities like the Ironbound and addressing climate change.

Thank you,
X