

Michael Harris

The addition of natural-gas based power generation as this permit requests would be a catastrophe for Dona Ana County, the surrounding area, and indeed New Mexico as a whole. The proposed solid-oxide fuel cell system claims high efficiency and minimal NOX emissions. However, even if true, these claims must be considered alongside the monumental scale of the project. The proposed plant is equivalent in output to El Paso Electric's total generation capacity (including nuclear and solar). EPE's four major natural gas generators are distributed in an area of over 130 sq miles. This project is asking to concentrate *four major power plants* worth of emissions into a single industrial park in Dona Ana County.

At any efficiency, that represents an unprecedented increase in pollution of New Mexico's air. Las Cruces already receives smog from El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, and smoke from distant wildfires. Air pollution knows no borders. While the communities of Sunland Park, Santa Teresa, and rural Dona Ana County stand to suffer the most, the air quality in Las Cruces is at high risk from this project. The secondary "heat island" effect of concentrating so much energy into a small area is an emerging concern and should not be ignored; the negative effects of urban heat islands are already well known. The doubling of our area's CO2 emissions - in a time of increasingly extreme weather caused by climate change - may indeed prove to be an existential mistake.

I have made a career in the technology sector, and I appreciate the utility of new technology and its ability to make our lives better. As someone who works in the industry, I am confident in saying that the rush to construct these hyperscale "AI" datacenters has no basis in utility or underlying value. Nothing about this new technology is worth sacrificing our air, land, water, and the future of our communities over.

As a Las Cruces resident, business owner, and elected official, I respectfully ask that you decline this permit.