

Justin Ruiz

I am a resident of Santa Fe, New Mexico and I am asking that you deny Yucca Growth Infrastructure's air quality permit. Santa Fe has personally been a welcoming and beautiful home for myself and my family. I want to continue to live here and even raise my children here in the hopes that they have a safe and secure future. However, that future is under threat with this proposed air quality permit. A change to fuel cells has minimal impacts on the suffering everyone will endure as a result of the gas plant's air pollution.

To add 10 million metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution and a vague estimate of toxic emissions to Sunland Park/Santa Teresa active and long-time nonattainment zone would be nothing short of blatant environmental racism. Their metro area is currently 16th worst in the nation for ozone pollution and southern New Mexico has received a failing grade on this air quality standard every single year since 2000. New Mexicans are already breathing some of the most compromised air in the whole country. It is completely unacceptable to invite a new source of hyperscale air pollution into our communities. The carbon dioxide pollution alone from this project will heat our atmosphere at a much faster pace and promote the formation of even more ground-level ozone. We cannot afford more intense heat. The other toxic air pollutants are extremely dangerous—many of them at very low levels.

How are parents and families supposed to send their kids to school knowing what they are breathing in? Knowing it can cause permanent brain damage or breathing complications before they have had a chance to grow up.

Fuel cells also create hazardous waste and the fuel cell provider for this project has a history of illegally dumping this waste and hiding it for several years. This company will likely repeat its bad habits, illegally dumping dangerous and undisclosed chemicals into our public landfills, and we will just have to wait until somebody notices?

Doña Ana County has and continues to face an illegal dumping epidemic so how can I be sure that these systemic oversight failures won't continue and expand to include this dangerous and experimental fuel cell operation. A fine for illegal dumping does not undo damage or its spread once the aquifer and soils are contaminated. It also will not re-capture the volatile chemicals that are released into the air when hazardous waste is improperly stored and disposed of.

New Mexico Environment Department needs to provide:

the public should be given an additional 60 days to review and comment on the air quality permit so community members can participate equitably.

The air quality permit application should be denied given Bloom Energy's history of illegal dumping hazardous waste.

If the permit is not denied, a public hearing needs to be held in Santa Teresa, in both English and Spanish, with an option to participate virtually.

Approving this permit would be government-sponsored environmental racism as residents of Doña Ana County are already disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution.