

# **Arizona utility regulators' decision promotes solar + storage, but does not halt TEP gas plant**

## **Staged construction plan evades moratorium limit**

In recommending an acceleration of renewable energy production in Arizona, The state's Corporation Commission (AZCC) Tuesday refused to consider Tucson Electric Power's and other state utilities' Integrated Resource Plans. The AZCC also indicated it would issue a moratorium on new natural gas-fired energy production projects greater than 150 megawatts. The Commission, however, approved the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility for TEP's planned 200 megawatt gas-fired development at its Sundt Generating Station at Irvington & Alvernon, according to Sandy Bahr, Director of Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, since it only plans to install 100 megawatts this year. TEP's permit requires an increase in allowed levels of air pollution from the plant.

The decision requires utilities that would apply for a waiver to conduct an "independent analysis comparing the present and future costs between the specific natural gas procurement and alternative energy storage options."

"The Commission's approval of more pollution in Tucson is a bitter pill to swallow. For us right now it overpowers the sweetness of a moratorium and support for solar + storage," said Duane Ediger, a member of Sustainable Tucson and organizer for Power Generation for Generations to Come (PGGC). "Now is the time for Tucsonans to come to the defense of our city's frontline communities, who have lost loved ones to water contamination, asthma and other environmental harm. The added air pollution, greenhouse gases Sundt would emit are avoidable injuries, and we will persist in defending life. TEP should see that the time for solar + energy storage is now," he said.

Sierra Club and local organizations are mobilizing concerned Tucsonans for March 28. A rally will be held at 4:15 p.m. at TEP headquarters, 88 E Broadway. Participants will then march to the Pima County Public Works office, 201 N. Stone Ave, where the County Department of Environmental Quality will host a community meeting on TEP's proposed gas plant.

Other than approving TEP's Certificate, the AZCC's ruling closely adheres to requests from Tucsonans who wrote to the Commission. It calls for an independent analysis comparing the present and future costs between burning fossil fuels and renewables plus energy storage. The Commission noted that it is acting to protect ratepayers from unnecessary capital improvements and stranded asset costs.

Power Generations for Generations to Come's web site is <http://renewnow.us>.