

TALKING POINTS FOR 12/19/01 HEARING ON NYPA POWER PLANTS

FACTS: Last summer the New York Power Authority (NYPA) built 11 power plants in 7 sites. The plants use turbines that run on natural gas, each produce 47 megawatts of power, and have 107-foot stacks. The sites for are:

- Harlem River Yards, South Bronx – 2 turbines
- Hell Gate, South Bronx – 2 turbines
- Long Island City, Queens – 2 turbines
- Sunset Park, Brooklyn – 2 turbines
- Williamsburg, Brooklyn – 1 turbine
- Brentwood, Long Island – 1 turbine
- Rosewood, Staten Island – 1 turbine

Community groups recently won a lawsuit against NYPA for not properly studying the possible environmental and health impacts of the power plants on the nearby neighborhoods. The court ordered NYPA to do an environmental impact statement (EIS). In particular, NYPA must fully study the potential impacts of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). PM 2.5 are microscopic particles that lodge in the lungs and can cause respiratory illnesses (such as asthma), cardiovascular disease and even premature death. The burning of natural gas produces large amounts of PM 2.5.

The neighborhoods near the plants already have high levels of PM 2.5 in the air. These neighborhoods also have some of the highest asthma rates in the world. It is very important that NYPA's study of PM 2.5 is complete and accurate—it must take into account the existing levels of PM 2.5, the health conditions of the nearby residents, the amount of emissions from the plants, and secondary formation of PM 2.5 (secondary formation happens when chemicals coming from the plant eventually turn into PM 2.5)

Lack of Community Participation

Once again NYPA is limiting public participation and comment on the EIS. NYPA refused to prepare a “scoping” statement, which would have alerted the communities as to how the EIS would be prepared. Instead, NYPA gave two weeks notice of a hearing on the draft EIS scheduled for December 19th, less than one week from Christmas. NYPA's deadline for written comments is on New Years' Eve!

No Health Assessment

NYPA has not done a health assessment of the neighborhoods. There is no analysis of the health impacts of PM 2.5 on the people living and working near the plants. NYPA did not even consider the fact that the asthma hospitalization rates in these areas are among the highest in the U.S. (up to nine times the national average).

Air Quality – Potential Environmental Harm

In the draft EIS, NYPA determined that there will be no significant impact on the community or the environment. The EIS is supposed to be a comprehensive study of the air impacts but the draft is only 28 pages long! The turbines will add new air pollution emissions to already polluted neighborhoods.

- ✓ The draft EIS did not thoroughly evaluate the potential impact of the increased PM 2.5 emissions.
- ✓ The draft EIS did not adequately evaluate alternative sites for the power plants.
- ✓ The draft EIS did not require NYPA to locally offset all of the increased air pollution emissions.

WHAT MUST NYPA DO: NYPA must prepare a full assessment of the health impacts of the power plants and take into account the cumulative impact of other sources on the neighborhoods. NYPA must design a real offset program that will offset PM 2.5 emissions in each local community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: To show your concern for the environment and public health, go to the hearing on December 19th at 6:00 PM at Middle School 88, 544 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY (an additional site to be announced for the Bronx) and submit written comments to William V. Slade, Director, Environmental Division, New York Power Authority, 123 Main Street, White Plains, New York 10601, phone: (914) 681-6405, fax: (914) 287-3294.