

SUPERVISOR SOPHIE MAXWELL ANNOUNCES PLAN TO START SHUTTING DOWN POTRERO POWER PLANT THIS YEAR

Community, City United In Effort To Shutter San Francisco's Last Fossil Fuel-Burning Power Plant By End Of 2009

San Francisco, California, May 12, 2009 -- Just over a year after one hundred Bayview-Hunters point residents and environmental activists rallied on the steps of City Hall in advance of a marathon 10-hour hearing on San Francisco's Potrero Power Plant, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell announced a plan to begin closing the facility this year without the construction of a new power plant to replace it. Last summer, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors was engaged in a heated debate about whether to approve a controversial plan to spend \$273 million on new power plants in and around the Bayview-Hunters Point community to replace the Potrero Plant. Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier, Ross Mirkarimi, Chris Daly, and current Assemblymember Tom Ammiano prevailed upon colleagues to apply pressure to state regulators at the California Independent System Operator (Cal-ISO) to revisit Cal-ISO's 2004 position that the only way to close the Potrero Plant was to build new power plants.

Intervention by Mayor Gavin Newsom in June of last year led to Cal-ISO President Yakout Mansour opining that San Francisco's need for in-city standby "peaker" power to prevent possible outages had dropped from 200 megawatts to 150 megawatts since 2004, leading City officials to question all underlying assumptions about the need to condemn San Francisco's low-income Southeast communities of color to future years of pollution with brand new power plants. Yesterday's announcement by Supervisor Maxwell, who represents the neighborhoods most affected by the old power plant as well as the proposed new power plants, marks the end of the City's quest for a path to closing the Potrero Power Plant in the most environmentally just way possible.

Supervisor Maxwell's presentation highlighted the fact that further analysis by the Cal-ISO has revealed that the gap required to cover San Francisco's reliability needs has shrunk to no more than 25 megawatts, eliminating the need for the 362 megawatt Potrero Plant or last year's proposed 200 megawatt combustion turbine power plants. As reported in yesterday's San Francisco Examiner ("New effort afoot to close city plant," May 11, 2009) San Francisco power official Barbara Hale stated last week that upgrades to San Francisco's electricity grid put the City "in a strong position to argue that Mirant's main generator and smokestack could be switched off this year."

Yesterday's announcement has excited and united community groups, environmentalists, and environmental justice activists who have campaigned for years to shut down the Potrero Plant without building new plants, an effort that has attracted the support of organizations such as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense, Greenaction, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, as well as national leaders including Van Jones and Robert Kennedy Jr. The final push to shut the Potrero Power Plant this year carries the added benefit that San Francisco will be able to sell the turbines planned to fire the proposed new power plants, which will add \$10 million to the City's general fund according to a report in this morning's Examiner ("Equipment sale could net S.F. \$10M for general fund," May 12, 2009).

Activists have offered their commitment to ensure that San Francisco's unused turbines are dedicated to replacing one or more of California's 12 coal-burning power plants that generate 400 megawatts of electricity, the largest of which is a 63-megawatt facility in Kern County.

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