



# Pacific Environment

5 January 2003

For Immediate Release

**Border Power Plant Working Group**

**Greenpeace USA**

**Local Power**

**Marin CAN (Clean Alternative Energy Now)**

**Pacific Environment**

**Public Citizen**

For more information, contact:

Paul Fenn, Local Power: 510/451-1727, or [paulfenn@local.org](mailto:paulfenn@local.org)

Rory Cox, Pacific Environment, 510/251-8800 x302, or [rcox@pacificenvironment.org](mailto:rcox@pacificenvironment.org)

Alisa Macdonnell, Greenpeace, 415/255-9221, or [alisa.macdonnell@sfo.greenpeace.org](mailto:alisa.macdonnell@sfo.greenpeace.org)

## **Green Power Advocates Cry Foul Over Upcoming State Power Initiative**

In a letter addressed to members of the California Public Utilities Commission, a coalition of Community Choice and Green Power Advocates are calling for the Commission to reject a plan that will lock the state into a framework for long-term power contracts by the state's former electric monopolies. The Commission may vote on the framework by CPUC's President Michael Peevey at their upcoming meeting on Thursday, January 8. Peevey was formerly the President of Southern California Edison. The coalition claims Peevey's framework will put ratepayers on the hook for the utilities' contracts and natural gas-fired power plant acquisitions for up to ten years, and will commit the state to buying natural gas at a time when it should begin converting to cleaner power sources. This, the letter says, will be a setback to recent laws that allow for communities to opt-out of contracts with the utilities to develop renewables, hydrogen and energy efficiency technologies, as well as to the recent senate bill which mandates a level of 20% renewable energies for the state by 2020.

As a result of resolutions passed by San Francisco (Sup. Ammiano), Los Angeles County (Vera), Mairn County (Sup. Brown) and ten other municipalities in early December, the CPUC delayed a vote on this controversial item at its December 18 meeting.

At their meeting on December 18, 2003, public outcry over long-term contracts led Peevey to remove the long-term component from his proposed decision, and the

Commission voted to extend existing procurement contracts through 2004 only. Coalition members say that now some CPUC members are trying to push through the multi-year contracts without hearing comments from the public, or without considering the impact to Community Choice or renewable energy laws. They say it would lock the state into contracts for natural gas at a time when many, including Alan Greenspan, are projecting a prolonged natural gas crisis.

Carole Migden, the chair of the State Board of Equalization, joined in the chorus of protest in a recent Op-Ed that appeared in the San Francisco Bay Guardian. She writes, "Ratepayers are already being forced to assume a huge burden to bring PG&E back to financial solvency. Why should they and local communities throughout California be penalized again for determining how to accommodate their energy needs responsibly?"

Community Choice advocate Paul Fenn expressed outrage at what he fears is an unraveling of years of work on the issue. "The people of California have made it clear that they want community control over their energy, and they want clean energy. We have the technology to convert to renewables, and we have the public's support. Why do these five individuals ignore this?"

Coalition members, alarmed that this issue was scheduled on the heels of a long holiday break, will spend the next few days building public pressure on CPUC members to delay voting on this issue until later in the year. They claim that the public needs time to learn about the issue in public workshops, and to comment on it.

Comments can be made to commissioners by faxing or calling. The swing votes are held by Commissioner Geoffrey Brown (tel 415 703 1407; fax 703 1294) and Carl Wood.(tel 415 703 2440; fax 703 1252). More information may be found at <http://www.local.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

[Rory Cox](#)  
[Communications Coordinator](#)  
[Pacific Environment](#)  
[1440 Broadway, Suite 306](#)  
[Oakland, CA 94612](#)  
[Ph: 510/251-8800 x302](#)  
[www.pacificenvironment.org](http://www.pacificenvironment.org)

[\*Protecting the Living Environment of the Pacific Rim\*](#)