



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Environmental Groups Demand Carbon Neutrality for Carlsbad Desalination Plant

Activists Call on State Agency and Poseidon Resources to Fulfill Their Promises of No Impact

Representatives from San Diego Coastkeeper and Surfrider Foundation came together to demand the State Lands Commission comply with the agency's prior commitment and hold Poseidon Resources to its promise to fully mitigate environmental and climate impacts from the proposed Carlsbad Desalination Plant (CDP). The CDP, which will be the largest desalination facility in the western hemisphere, will take in over 300 million gallons of ocean water every day to create 50 million gallons of drinking water for the San Diego region.

The CDP is the most energy-intensive method to enhance local water supplies, and will contribute over 100,000 metric tons of CO₂, a greenhouse gas, to the atmosphere every year. Yet, despite its oft-repeated promise of carbon neutrality, Poseidon Resources in its *Energy Minimization and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan* has committed to offset a fraction of emissions it will contribute to the atmosphere. If this plan is approved, the CDP will add over two million metric tons of CO₂ over the next thirty years.

"Saying you'll be carbon neutral does not make it so, and Poseidon Resources' plan is a far cry from truly mitigating the facility's impact on our fragile environment," noted Coastkeeper's Executive Director Bruce Reznik. "This plan does not comply with the goals of AB 32, and will exacerbate climate change at a time when we should be taking all necessary steps to reduce greenhouse gas emission."

AB 32, *The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, bringing the State into compliance with the Kyoto Protocol. At the October 30, 2007 State Lands Commission hearing, Commissioners stressed the importance of carbon neutrality, as evidenced by Lieutenant Governor and then-Chairperson John Garamendi's statement:

"It is my very strong view, I personally hold this view, that this project has to be at least carbon neutral. There's no way that the State is going to be able to achieve AB 32 requirements with major projects. And this is a significant project with -- we want at least a carbon neutral situation."

Commented Reznik, “I expect the Commissioners to fulfill the promises they made in October and require Poseidon Resources to truly offset the facility’s environmental impact in line with the company’s promises and the recommendations of the agency’s own staff.”

The State Lands Commission staff has recommended that Poseidon Resources increase carbon offsets from what was committed to in its plan. This recommendation is in line with the previous position taken by staff at the California Coastal Commission.

Further, the proposed desalination facility, as designed, will kill marine life by using the co-located power station’s antiquated cooling water intake. “The power station is planning to abandon the intake system and replace it with technology that avoids marine life mortality” stated Joe Geever, California Policy Coordinator for Surfrider Foundation. “What’s hard to explain is why our State agencies would approve a desalination facility that will continue killing our precious marine life when alternative intake designs would avoid this destruction.”

“At every agency we have dealt with, the judgment of staff with extensive expertise has been ignored, overruled or squashed outright by agency Board appointees who are under extreme political pressure,” said Geever. “State agencies have a duty to enforce environmental laws and, as difficult as it is, not bow to this pressure. We’re hopeful State Lands Commissioners will do that.”

While critical of the Carlsbad Desalination Plant, Coastkeeper and Surfrider have stressed the need to enhance local water supplies through more eco-friendly alternatives, including conservation, water recycling or even desalination projects that use best available technology and fully mitigate impacts.

Environmental groups endorsing the Coastkeeper/Surfrider position of full mitigation include, among others, Sierra Club, Heal the Bay, Planning & Conservation League, California Coastkeeper Alliance and Southern California Watershed Alliance.

“The time has come to truly take on the challenge of addressing climate change and restoring our precious marine life populations,” added Reznik. “Approving Poseidon’s ill-conceived plan would be unconscionable in light of our current crises.”

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Founded in 1995, San Diego Coastkeeper protects the region’s bays, beaches, watersheds and ocean for the people and wildlife that depend on them. We balance community outreach, education, and advocacy to promote stewardship of clean water and a healthy coastal ecosystem.

Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves, and beaches for all people.