

For immediate release: April 11, 2006

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Greenaction and Bayview Hunters Point Residents Protest at Gates of Dirty and Outdated PG&E Hunters Point Power Plant

100 join protest despite big rain storm, block entrances to power plant

San Francisco, CA – Fed up with PG&E’s refusal to set a specific date to close the PG&E Hunters Point power plant and tired of years of broken promises to shut it down, 100 people led by Bayview Hunters Point community residents and Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice protested today at the gates of the polluting power plant to ensure it closes once and for all.

Despite a terrible rain storm, the spirited and large crowd listened to community members including kids describe the ill health effects from the pollution in Bayview Hunters Point. After the rally at the front gate, which PG&E closed right before the protest, participants marched in the street and blocked the other entrances to the power plant. A lock was placed on one key gate by participants, and everyone attending today’s action vowed to return soon if the plant remained open.

The power plant is located at Evans and Middlepoint, San Francisco, in the heart of the low-income Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood. As one of California’s dirtiest and oldest power plants, it has polluted the community for over 77 years. Residents suffer very high rates of asthma and cancer.

PG&E officials have recently made numerous conflicting statements about the supposed upcoming closure of the power plant. First, in September PG&E told the California Independent System Operator (ISO) that the plant should be able to close by early April, but this deadline has now passed. Next, in November they wrote a letter to the ISO stating it should close by the end of the second quarter (by end of June). Then, three weeks ago a PG&E official told Greenaction that construction of transmission lines required for ISO approval for the shut down had been completed, and were undergoing testing. Last week PG&E told a City Department of the Environment official that construction had not been completed. On April 6th PG&E Vice President Bob Harris told an environmental group representative that the plant would be closed “8 days after the rains stop.”

PG&E has had so-called community groups that it directly supports praise the company, ignoring the ongoing criticism from residents who actually live next to the plant and suffer every day from dirty air.

Tessie Ester, resident of the Huntersview public housing project located across the street from the PG&E plant and chair of the Bayview Hunters Point Mothers Committee for Environmental Justice, said “After years of watching our children suffer with asthma and other illnesses, we won’t be singing or dancing until it closes, and we will protest until this polluter closes immediately.”

“Residents and Greenaction are at the gates of this power plant today to make sure this dirty polluter is shut down once and for all,” said Marie Harrison, community organizer for Greenaction. “We are tired of delay after delay and broken promises from PG&E and government officials, and we are prepared to return in a few weeks if the plant remains open. The pollution must end.”

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