

La Raza Network of Sacramento Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice

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SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL REJECTS PLASMA ARC INCINERATOR PROJECT

Unanimous 9-0 Vote Kills Controversial Project Huge Victory for Clean Air, Health, Environmental Justice & Renewable Energy

Sacramento, CA – In a decision with local, national and international implications, Sacramento’s City Council voted unanimously last night to kill the controversial plasma arc incinerator project they had considered for the last year. A company called USST and City staff had promoted the plasma arc technology as a safe way to treat large amounts of municipal solid waste and supposedly generate electricity.

The City Council voted 9-0 to scrap the plasma arc facility proposed by USST after months of opposition from community, environmental and social justice organizations and after hearing from independent experts who confirmed that plasma arc at best was an unproven and financially risky technology that did not meet state definitions of renewable energy.

Opponents had been educating the City Council since the project first was proposed that plasma arc is in reality an “incinerator in disguise” that would pollute the air and undermine recycling and renewable energy programs. Groups that helped defeat the plasma arc project included the La Raza Network, Greenaction, Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), Justice Reform Coalition, Sierra Club, Californians Against Waste, Search for

a Cause, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives and Pastor Robert Jones of the Oakpark United Methodist Church.

City Council members criticized themselves and city staff for not thoroughly investigating all aspects of plasma arc technology from the beginning of the process, and have now decided to do a better job and explore a range of alternatives to the current practice of trucking their garbage to a Nevada landfill in a public and transparent process.

“The City Council voted for a fair process,” said Rafael Aguilera of the La Raza Network and Verde Group. “It was becoming an embarrassment to the environmental reputation of the city.

“Councilmembers Hammond, Cohn, Fong and McCarty all demonstrated leadership and resolve in favor of the public good and a participatory approach to assessing the city’s green options. Mayor Johnson was noticeably absent from the entire discussion. Plasma Incineration has been totally discredited - environmentally, economically, and technologically - in the City of Sacramento.”

“The City Council deserves a lot of credit for scrutinizing and researching the claims of the plasma arc industry and then making their decision to reject the plasma arc incinerator in disguise,” said Bradley Angel, Executive Director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. “The City Council’s vote will protect the health, environment and finances of the City, and we look forward to working together to maximize recycling, zero waste programs and true renewable energy.”

Martin Luther King Jr. had something to say about arc’s of a different kind:

“When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”

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