

## **Open Letter to the People of Brockton:**

It is highly regrettable that the Brockton Education Association (BEA) has allowed its ties to other unions to supersede its ties to the children of Brockton. In fairness, a small number of teachers were allowed to decide on behalf of the 1,400 members of the teacher's union to endorse the proposed power plant that will add, by the proponents own estimates, millions of tons of pollutants and greenhouse gases per year to Brockton's environment. Although they claim to have spent several weeks examining both sides of the issue, they only heard from the opponents' legal representative a few days before making their decision.

One of the chief examples cited as a reason for supporting the plant is the mantra chanted by the proponents over the past few months: That it was unanimously approved by the state's Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB) in January. The fact is that this board has never failed to issue a permit for a power plant in its history. That is a fact! This board has never found any power plant proposed in Massachusetts that should not be permitted. That is the way the system is designed. Brockton Power will be happy to tell you how much cleaner this plant will be than the several 'filthy' plants still in use. What you won't be told is that these plants were approved and permitted as being 'state of the art' at the time they were built, and now those communities cannot get rid of them, and even if this plant is built there are no plans to shut down even one other plant in Massachusetts. That means every ounce of pollution emitted by this plant can only add to Massachusetts' air pollution.

This approval came despite the fact that during public deliberation, members of the EFSB stated that there is 'no public benefit' to this plant and that the proponents 'never showed that there was no health impact.' The EFSB did, however, send a clear message when it failed, for what may be the first time in its history, to issue a proponents request for a waiver from local planning and zoning review. I would also remind Brockton Power and the public that while the EFSB took a verbal vote, which is not official until after its 'tentative' decision is published, a comment period is completed, a Final Decision is published, and the permit is actually issued, none of which has occurred nearly four months after the hearing was completed. To understand the full context of that 'approval' cited by Brockton Power, the BEA and anyone else who cares needs to wait and read the full text of that decision. In that regard, this endorsement is at best premature and may be less fact based than it is politically motivated.

The BEA, just like the Brockton Power propaganda and a recently published Commentary written by leaders of other unions, refers to the plant as a natural gas fueled plant, which is not exactly the whole truth. The proposed plant will also burn diesel fuel up to sixty days each year, as requested by the proponents who have repeatedly refused to commit to doing so only when natural gas supplies were unavailable, a situation they claim as the reason they must be dual fueled. As the parent of seven children educated in the Brockton Public Schools, who only left (to downsize in an over 55 community) after all the children had graduated from Brockton High School, I have an enormous amount of respect for the members of the BEA. However, I find this to be an instance when the whole does not begin to equal the sum of its parts.

Is there an economic argument to be made? Of course there is. None of us wants to see police, fire, teacher or other lay-offs. For that matter, none of us wants to see private sector layoffs, either. But we survived over the past several decades without selling out to this kind of risk, which, at best, provides 'no public benefit' and has not been proven to have 'no health impact.'

The grassroots opposition to this plant can never match the public relations machine and the millions of dollars that fuel it through Advanced Power and Siemens Worldwide. We can't, despite our best efforts and those of underpaid and unpaid legal representatives and pro-bono experts, completely change a system and a process stacked in favor of more and more fossil fueled power plants in an era when we all know we need to be turning to renewable energy; and when ISO-New England, the operator of the electrical grid, recently stated that the additional power to be generated would not be needed for six to ten years, even with no renewable energy being added. All we can do is provide the public with information we have been able to gather on our own time with limited resources and hope that common sense will prevail.

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