

Would the proposed power plant in Brockton be a benefit to the city?

YES

Francis Mara

Brockton resident, former city councilor and state representative, consultant to Brockton Power



The recent announcement of Pilgrim nuclear power station's pending retirement has raised serious questions about the future reliability of our electricity supply. The city of Brockton has a chance to be part of the solution to this potential crisis through the support of a local development project.

Brockton Power would be a safe, reliable natural gas electric generating facility. It is the project best positioned to pick up the slack for the electric grid when Pilgrim closes, and to help us avoid the kind of power shortages that would make the inconveniences of last winter's struggles with the MBTA pale in comparison. Brockton Power offers clean, environmentally safe energy that along with intermittent solar and wind technology would replace Pilgrim and other older plants retiring from the system and bolster the region's electricity supply.

Brockton can follow the blueprint of Salem, a city able to benefit locally from the development of a natural gas generating facility while ensuring regional electric grid reliability. In 2014 Salem agreed to a \$95 million tax deal with the Footprint Power project in Salem Harbor with unanimous approval from the mayor and the Salem City Council.

The Brockton Power developers and mayor of Brockton have already agreed to a deal that would result in total tax and water payments to the city of \$120 million (for a project half the size of the one in Salem) and an additional \$2.85 million of immediate community benefits. This guaranteed 30-year revenue stream would allow Brockton to pay teachers, police, and firefighters, groups that have felt the pain of recent budget constraints.

As a lifelong Brockton resident, I have a strong interest in the future of this city and great faith that Brockton will use this opportunity and welcome the development of Brockton Power as one of our newest and largest taxpayers. This is not just a local Brockton story; the city's

leadership and support for the Brockton Power project will lead to hundreds of construction jobs and millions of dollars of spending in the local economy, and bolster the region's electric grid with safe and reliable electric generation.

NO

Kate Archard

Brockton resident, member of the city's Water Commission



“Disparate impact discrimination” holds that practices may be considered discriminatory and illegal if they have a disproportionate “adverse impact” on persons in a protected class. It is a relevant concept when we think about the proposed Brockton power plant.

Low-income communities face a cumulative exposure rate to environmentally hazardous facilities and sites that is more than 2 1/2 times greater than higher-income communities. High-minority communities face a cumulative exposure rate to these types of properties that is nearly 16 times greater than low-minority communities. And Brockton is already disproportionately overburdened with them.

The proposed Brockton Power project seeks to use 2 million gallons a day of recycled sewer water as its cooling source -- water that will contain industrial and pharmaceutical by-products. Before its use, the effluent will need to be highly chemically treated, and then turned into steam vapor to be circulated into Brockton's air, dramatically changing the local atmosphere. State and federal regulations do not require any evidence about the potential health impact of breathing in recycled sewer water. But it is difficult not to be concerned when Brockton already has one of the state's highest childhood asthma hospitalization rates, along with high incidents of respiratory and cardiac illnesses.

The proposed location of the project is less than 1,600 feet from two large elementary schools, senior high-rise complexes, and large residential neighborhoods in a city with high numbers of immigrants, minorities, and low-income people. What will be the health impact of adding more than a million tons of additional pollution and unregulated sewer effluent into the air for our community? What Brockton residents need is for our elected officials to start bringing in projects that improve the quality of life

for all our residents. A fossil-fuel power plant that dumps pollution on our most vulnerable residents, lowers home values, and puts our neighborhoods at risk will only bring more harm and negative impact to the city of Brockton. Moreover, the implications of climate change and carbon emissions worldwide will only be effected by those changes we make in our own communities. If we are going to do better for the entire planet, we can and must do better for Brockton.

As told to Globe correspondent John Laidler. He can be reached at laidler@globe.com.