

Proposed Central Valley power plant clears major hurdle

SACRAMENTO

November 10, 2009 2:20pm



- **Avenal Energy Project recommended for final approval**
- **Would generate 600 megawatts of power**

A California Energy Commission siting committee is recommending that the full five-member commission approve the 600-megawatt Avenal Energy Project in Kings County.

In its presiding member's proposed decision (PMPD) released Tuesday afternoon, the two-member siting committee says the facility, as mitigated, will have no significant impacts on the environment and complies with applicable laws, ordinances, regulations and standards, or what's called "LORS."

The PMPD is not a final decision on the project. The committee led by Commissioner Jeffrey Byron has released the document for 30 days of public comment. The committee will consider input before bringing the proposed decision to the full commission.

The PMPD says the project has complied with rules and requirements of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and that all biological, soil, water and agricultural impacts of the plant have been fully mitigated to a less than significant level -- not only for the project site but also for the construction lay down areas.

The project, as a combined-cycle power plant with twin heat recovery steam generators will reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions within the electrical system by displacing more carbon intensive generation sources, the report says.

Project owner Avenal Power Center LLC of Houston, Texas, plans to develop the Avenal Energy project on 34 acres of a 148-acre site zoned for industrial use just south of the Fresno County line and two miles east of Interstate 5. The proposed project is six miles from the city of Avenal's residential and commercial districts.

If licensed by the Energy Commission, the \$530 million power facility will begin construction in April 2010, with initial startup in October 2011 and full commercial operation by June 2012.