

# News Release

For Immediate Release  
March 18, 2004

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## **Citizens Organize to Stop Proposed Riesel Coal Plant**

Today in Riesel, Texas, a diverse group of citizens announced that they have organized to stop the proposed coal plant and are urging others to join them. Those who would be affected by the plant have until March 22<sup>nd</sup> to comment on the plant or request a contested case hearing.

Ricky Bates lives across from the 700 acre site of the proposed plant. Citizens gathered together there to point out the various problems with the site and express their concerns. "This plant will release thousands of tons of pollutants that cause smog, acid rain and global warming and particles that cause breathing difficulties. It would release toxic mercury, which can lead to contamination of fish, putting children at risk for learning disabilities and brain damage." Bates continued, "Texas doesn't need this plant, and local citizens and those who live downwind, as far away as Dallas/Ft. Worth will bear the impacts of the added pollution. Citizens have until 5 pm on Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> to get comments or requests for a contested case hearing in to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)."

Jimmy Carpenter has three sons including twin four-year old sons. "My boys both have to use breathing machines due to asthma. We live downwind from an existing gas-fired plant and near the site of the proposed plant. The pollution from a coal plant would make it even harder for them to breathe. This dirty coal plant needs to be stopped," said Carpenter.

Melissa Lauderdale is the mother of two young children. She expressed concerns that "The mercury from the plant would be 1180 pounds, making Riesel the second largest source of this toxic pollution, in the state with the most mercury emissions from power plants. Mercury gets into water and then into fish, and eating the contaminated fish can put children at risk for brain damage. We can't afford to risk the health of our children. There are no specific mercury controls in the permit for the proposed plant." Controls exist today that can reduce mercury by 90%.

Rancher Don Poston stated that "The waste that goes into storage pits at a coal plant contains many toxic substances, and leaching can occur through gravel seams. Toxics like mercury and other heavy metals could end up in our wells and in our river."

Ruth Pilant, a grandmother concerned about the health of her grandchildren, noted that "This proposed plant has pollution rates 50 to 100% over the rates of another coal plant proposed for San Antonio. Why would LS Development Company want to build such a dirty plant in our area? Profits, at the expense of those who live here. Our whole life savings is in our home and the value of our home will go down if the plant is built"

Joshua Van Schoik, a father of three, held his baby while discussing the economic future of Riesel and nearby communities. "People say that the plant would bring money into our

schools, but the truth is that with Robin Hood policies, most of the money would go to other school districts. Our property values would surely decline. We should look for better and cleaner ways to build our economy.” Mr. Van Schoik’s two daughters have to take asthma medications.

Robert Cervenka, a rancher, said that “We are in an area that already suffers from air pollution- not just from these nearby gas plants but from Alcoa near Rockdale. It’s not just people here who will be affected. The coal plant would produce pollution that would impact Waco and Dallas/Ft. Worth. The site has many problems, including the runoff that goes into nearby streams, lakes and the Brazos River. To top things off, a fault line runs through the property. We don’t need this plant. Texas has 30% more power than we need, even on the hottest days. Some new gas plants are shutting down because there’s no market for the power they produce. The plant is proposed by a company with headquarters in St. Louis and offices in New Jersey, and the site is owned by a man who lives in Chicago. We have a message for these folks from out of state, and that is – *‘Don’t Mess With Texas.’* “

Other contacts:

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Notice of the proposed plant was published in the Feb. 20, 2004 Riesel Rustler. No notice appeared in other local papers or the Waco Tribune.

A sample comment letter and request a public meeting is online at [www.seedcoalition.org](http://www.seedcoalition.org) in a section on Riesel, along with a sample letter for requesting a contested case hearing. Comments or hearing requests to TCEQ can be faxed into the Chief Clerk’s Office by 5 PM on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, although a hard copy of the letter must be received by the agency within the next 3 days.

Letters should be addressed to  
Ms. LaDonna Castuanuela  
Chief Clerk, MC-105  
P.O. Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

The subject should include: Proposed State Air Quality Permit 70861 and PSD Permit #PSD-TX-1039, submitted by Sandy Creek Energy Associates, L.P. seeking authorization to construct a coal-fired power plant and contain the address and phone number of the requestor.

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