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Despite Significant Opposition, SRP Approves Huge Gas Plant Expansion

Phoenix - Today, the Board of Salt River Project (SRP), Arizona's second-largest electric utility, approved a plan to spend nearly \$1 billion to build 16 new gas units at its power plant in Coolidge, Arizona, despite significant opposition from clean energy supporters, consumer advocates, faith leaders, conservation groups, legislators, city officials, Coolidge residents, and six members of the SRP Board. This decision could lock in decades of new fossil-fuel use, all while Arizona sits in the bull's eye of climate change. The decision came with limited notice, no stakeholder process, and the utility did not seek any competitive bids for providing the power.

"There are all kinds of reasons the SRP Board should have rejected this gas expansion, including the negative impacts on air quality and the high price tag for ratepayers, but ultimately, the main reason is that if SRP is serious about being on a sustainable path and helping to address climate change, it needs to have its actions match its words," said **Sandy Bahr, chapter director, Sierra Club, Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter**. "Sustainability and climate goals are just not consistent with this continued reliance on fossil fuels, especially when energy efficiency, solar, and wind are so much cleaner and affordable."

"As a longtime collaborative partner on SRP's customer program development, I am very disappointed that they voted for a proposal where consumer impacts are virtually unknown," said **Caryn Potter, Utility Program Manager for the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project**. "Their customers and stakeholders deserve better."

"In a time where a full divestment from fossil fuel is the only choice we have to fight back the climate crisis, Salt River Project decides to invest in dirty energy that will harm our communities and environment for decades to come," said **Vianey Olivarrria, Chispa Arizona's State Co-Director**. "Arizonans already suffer from the high cost of fossil fuels and their impact on our health, personal economy, and the environment. Utilities need to put the health of people and our communities first and invest in clean, affordable, and renewable energy now."

Since adopting its 2035 sustainability commitments in 2019, SRP has decided to keep the Coronado Generating Station, a coal-fired power plant, running longer; approved new gas at its Agua Fria and Desert Basin gas plants; and now has voted to add 820 megawatts of new gas at

its Coolidge Generating Station. This significant continued dependence on fossil fuels is not consistent with sustainability and calls into question the utility's commitment to addressing climate change. SRP only plans to reduce its total carbon emissions by 35% from 2005 levels by 2035 -- this is not consistent with science-based goals.

The proposal to expand the Coolidge gas plant was announced at the end of August. The next day, the SRP Board Power Committee voted to move forward with the proposal, and three weeks later, the full board voted to approve the nearly \$1 billion project.

"With just days' notice, hundreds of SRP customers were moved to write to the Board opposing this dirty gas plant expansion. While this outcome was disappointing, the engagement from the community was anything but," said **Yara Marin, Regional Director, Interior West at Vote Solar and SRP customer**. "We will continue to engage SRP customers in the permitting process to ensure their voices are heard, alternatives are properly considered, and ultimately this dirty gas plant is denied."