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Plan to Reopen Gibbons Creek Coal Plant Takes A Hit as TMPA Backs Out of Interconnection Agreement

Community members call on cities to fully decommission and clean up the site

BRYAN, COLLEGE STATION, & DENTON, TX- Following significant community pressure, the Texas Municipal Power Agency (TMPA)—comprised of Bryan, Denton, Garland, and Greenville—has [submitted a letter](#) to the Texas Public Utility Commission (PUC) announcing that the current Interconnection Agreement (to reconnect the plant to the grid) has been terminated. TMPA had signed this agreement with the proposed buyer, an Arizona-based technology firm, of the Gibbons Creek coal plant this past June.

Community members and activists in Bryan and Denton, along with members of the Sierra Club's Lonestar Chapter, Texas Campaign for the Environment, and Environment Texas, are now calling on these cities to uphold their clean energy promises and fully commit to cleaning up and closing the Gibbons Creek coal plant for good. The four cities have already budgeted funds to continue the plant's decommissioning. [Over 1,000 Texans recently signed petitions opposing the sale of the plant.](#)

Dr. Pamela Johnson, with the Brazos Valley Action Group and Citizens Climate Lobby, said:

"It's time for TMPA and Bryan Texas Utilities to admit the obvious: selling the retired coal plant is a bad idea and too risky for our community. Instead, local leaders should work with the community to decommission the plant, clean up the site, and reimagine the Gibbons Creek Reservoir as a family-friendly recreation and natural area that will create local jobs."

"When the four cities agreed to retire the coal plant in the first place, communities welcomed the transition away from coal toward clean energy," **said Maggie Brookshire, a University of North Texas, Denton, alumna and community advocate.** "Now the cities should learn from this messy sale debacle and clearly recommit to clean up the power plant site for good."

The filing on Friday comes even as the buyer had been negotiating a sales price with TMPA and the four cities that are part owners of the facility, nearby land, and associated transmission lines. However, the company could still reach another Interconnection Agreement with TMPA, as well as a sales price.

Under Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and PUC rules, any company wanting to sell electricity into Texas's transmission grid must reach an "Interconnection Agreement" with the transmission company—in this case TMPA—and file the agreement with the PUC. For Gibbons Creek, the filed agreement stipulated that it would expire on September 30th [if a sale agreement had not been approved](#) by TMPA and the four cities that make up TMPA.

Shane Johnson, the Clean Energy Distributed Organizer for Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter issued the following statement:

"TMPA's choice to end the agreement before it expired on September 30th demonstrates the pointlessness of reopening a dirty, expensive coal plant as more and more solar, wind, and energy storage facilities enter the ERCOT grid. Even without including the costs of endangering the health and polluting the air and water of Bryan-College Station area residents, this plant is unviable."

The community members and activists that led efforts to oppose reopening the coal plant noted that they will continue to work together to monitor activities of TMPA and the four cities to ensure that no sale occurs which could lead to burning toxic coal at the mothballed site. They will also encourage the local utilities to invest more in clean energy technology and energy efficiency programs, especially those that will be accessible and affordable to all ratepayers.

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