

OPPOSE MORE AIR POLLUTION FROM PGE'S FRACKED GAS POWER PLANT

Public Comment Deadline: December 17, 2021

OVERVIEW

What is Carty Generating Station?

PGE's Carty Generating Station, located in Boardman, OR, is a 450-megawatt fracked gas power plant that generates electricity for retail customers.

What is the problem?

The Carty Plant produces a variety of harmful pollutants including, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, formaldehyde, toluene, and particulate matter. Of particular concern for this permit modification request from PGE are **carbon monoxide (CO)** and **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**—both of which have serious health and environmental impacts.

What is proposed?

PGE wants the Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to approve a massive increase in air pollution from carbon monoxide and volatile organic compound emissions. PGE wants to increase carbon monoxide pollution by almost 300%, and VOCs more than 800%. In the midst of a climate emergency, Oregon must focus on reducing emissions—not give a green light for more pollution.

BACKGROUND

The Carty Generating Station has been the focus of significant public interest and engagement for more than a decade. Now, PGE wants DEQ to allow massive increases in the permit levels for the facility's emissions of **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** and **carbon monoxide (CO)**.

The proposed permit is a modification for emissions from the existing fracked gas-powered electricity generation facility, Carty. The proposed permit modification does not change how much gas PGE uses or change the hours the plant can run. According to PGE, the permit modification is needed, in part, because PGE's coal-fired power plant closed in October 2020.

Additionally, the manufacturer of the facility's gas turbine released new information that startup and shutdown emissions for two major pollutants, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds, are higher than originally estimated. This ramping up and shutting down causes a massive increase in smog-causing emissions of CO and VOCs—a cost our airshed, our health, and our planet cannot afford.

In 2018, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) raised significant concerns about PGE's proposal to increase air pollution at Carty. In a letter to DEQ, the Tribe wrote: "The CTUIR DNR [Dept. of Natural Resources] is concerned that the proposed permit amendment increases the discharge of volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) to a level that exceeds the emission rate of the existing coal-fired power plant. VOCs can cause health and visibility problems, and increasing their release into the airshed of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area unnecessarily impacts a vital natural resource of significance to the CTUIR, the region and the nation."

The science is in on the harms of fracked gas. Urge DEQ to take protective action and reject this increase in harmful pollution.

GET INVOLVED

- [Sign the petition!](#)
- **Attend the public hearing** to learn about the permit application, ask any questions you might have and provide verbal or written comments on the proposed permit.
 - **When:** Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021 at 6 p.m.
 - [Register here.](#)

TALKING POINTS

- **Public health impacts of increased CO and VOC pollution.** VOCs are a precursor to low-level ozone formation (smog). VOCs combine with NO_x and sunlight to produce low-level ozone. PGE proposes to increase pollution in an area where DEQ frequently issues air stagnation advisories and alerts. Low-level ozone is a powerful respiratory irritant. When ozone spikes on hot summer days, emergency room visits and hospital admissions also rise for respiratory issues including asthma exacerbation and increased severity of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) symptoms. Ozone events could be triggered by the release of large amounts of VOCs during a period when sunlight is strong. The addition of a major VOC source will make them more likely. DEQ should not approve more VOC and carbon monoxide pollution.
- **Air quality near the facility and in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.** The proposed pollution increases would affect air quality in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which already experiences haze and other air quality problems. Studies should be done on the potential impact of smog-forming pollution on the Gorge National Scenic Area and nearby communities.
- **Fracked gas is not a climate-friendly energy alternative.** Since Carty was initially approved, multiple studies have demonstrated the cradle-to-grave climate change impacts of fracked gas. Specifically, methane released into the atmosphere during the production and transport of fracked gas is a far greater contributor to climate change than previously understood. Negative health impacts associated with fracked gas—from extraction, through transport, to combustion—disproportionately burden frontline communities.
- **Assess all options for holding PGE to lower pollution levels.** Limit startup and shutdown events. DEQ proposes an hourly limit during startup and shutdown. But these hourly emissions still result in a massive annual increase in smog-forming pollution, based on PGE’s expected operations. This is unacceptable.
 - Cold startups are particularly polluting events, according to the emissions summary for the Carty Plant. If these events are pushing PGE over its pollution limit, then PGE should limit cold startups.
 - Investigate additional Best Available Control Technologies (BACT) that could reduce VOC and carbon monoxide pollution, including restrictions on how PGE operates its facility.
- **We are experiencing a climate crisis.** In the midst of a climate emergency, we need to focus on reducing emissions—not giving a green light for more pollution! DEQ’s current plan to exempt fracked gas power plants like Carty from its so-called “Climate Protection Program” means DEQ should be doing *more* to rein in emissions through these facilities’ air permits, not less.

DEQ PUBLIC NOTICE: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/get-involved/documents/101821PGE.pdf>