



City of Newark

City Hall
920 Broad Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Legislation Text

File #: 20-1283, Version: 1

Dept/ Agency: Offices of Municipal Council/City Clerk

Action: () Ratifying (X) Authorizing () Amending

Type of Service: Opposing construction of the NJ Transit Gas-Fired Power Plant in Kearny, New Jersey

Purpose: To support renewable energy and a storage alternative for public transit resiliency.

Sponsor(s): Council Member, LaMonica R. McIver

Additional Information:

WHEREAS, NJ Transit has proposed to build a megawatt gas fired power plant (the “NJ TRANSIT GRID Traction Power System”) along the Hackensack River in Kearny, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, this gas-fired power plant would be paid for using \$546 Million of taxpayer provided Federal and State funding, including a \$410 Million Federal grant for Hurricane Sandy Recovery and Resiliency; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Sandy Recovery and Resiliency funding would be used to pay for gas-fired power plant that would increase greenhouse gas emissions, thus increasing the likelihood of more Sandy-like hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed NJ TRANSIT GRID gas-fired power plant would be another long-term source of harmful air pollution directly impacting North Jersey residents especially developing fetuses, children, older adults and those with cardiovascular, lung or respiratory problems; and

WHEREAS, the air pollution from the power plant would disproportionately harm communities of color and low-income communities in Newark, Jersey City and Kearny, in direct contradiction with Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 23 to promote environmental justice for all; and

WHEREAS, gas infrastructure facilities can annually emit into the air hundreds of tons of pollutants, including toxic particulate matter and chemicals such as sulfur dioxide, mercury and other harmful criteria pollutants known to increase the severity of asthma, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases exposing those with compromised health issues life threatening risk; and

WHEREAS, leading health organizations such as the American Medical Association have acknowledged the hazards and adverse health impact of natural gas infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, Bergen, Essex and Hudson Counties already receive grades of “F” from the American Lung Association for ground level ozone pollution, and in their “State of the Air 2019” Report, North Jersey will be most impacted by emissions from this power plant and only exacerbate the health conditions of significant populations with pediatric and adult asthma, COPD, lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes; and

WHEREAS, the NJ TRANSIT GRID gas-fired power plant would become the thirteen (13th) largest emitter of greenhouse gases in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the proposed gas-fired power plants requirement that chemicals such as ammonia, bleach and acids delivered by trucks and stored on-site would increase the potential for spills into nearby wetlands and streams and the Hackensack River; and

WHEREAS, NJ TRANSIT has never seriously explored alternative solutions to its proposed gas-fired power plant, including zero emissions technologies like solar, wind, or tidal energy combined with battery energy storage, each of which in combination would avoid environmental and public health issues while still providing new jobs and financial benefits to local municipalities such as Newark; and

WHEREAS, NJ TRANSIT's failure to seriously evaluate clean alternatives is in direct contradiction with several New Jersey laws and policies, including the State's Clean Air Act, 2018 Clean Energy Act and final 2019 Energy Master Plan to achieve 100% clean energy economy wide in New Jersey by 2050; and

WHEREAS, NJ TRANSIT has the opportunity to become a nationwide leader in both renewable energy and environmentally beneficial transit solutions, it is incumbent upon the agency to make every effort to adopt renewable energy and energy storage to power the NJ TRANSIT GRID project; and

WHEREAS, powering the microgrid project with renewable energy and energy storage would largely eliminate the need for NJ TRANSIT to purchase natural gas or power from the main electrical grid.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY THAT:

1. The Municipal Council strongly opposes NJ TRANSIT's proposed 140 megawatt gas-fired power plant, the NJ TRANSIT GRID Traction Power System, along the Hackensack River in Kearny, New Jersey and supports a renewable energy alternative, (solar, tidal, and wind) and energy storage system (battery and flywheel).
2. The Municipal Council urges Governor Murphy to direct NJ TRANSIT to immediately undertake a comprehensive engineering and economic analysis of the use of various renewable energy and storage technologies to power its Traction Power System microgrid and report back to the Office of the Governor and the public on the results of this analysis before it proceeds with bids to construct the system.
3. The City Clerk will forward this resolution to: Governor Phil Murphy; Catharine McCabe, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner; State Senator, Brian P. Stack; State Assemblywoman, Annette Chaparro; State Assemblyman, Raj Mukherij; the Food and Water Watch; the League of Municipalities; The Bergen Record and the Freeholders and Administration of Essex, Hudson, and Bergen Counties.

STATEMENT

Resolution declaring the Municipal Council's opposition to the construction of NJ TRANSIT's proposed 140 megawatt gas-fired power plant, the NJ TRANSIT GRID Traction Power System, along the Hackensack River in Kearny, New Jersey and supports a renewable energy alternative, (solar, tidal, and wind) and energy storage system (battery and flywheel).