

MIDWAY DRILLER
OPINION

Editorial

Hydrogen makes good sense for us

More hearings are underway as the permitting process for the proposed hydrogen energy plant near Tupman.

It's important to the area's future that enough people speak out in favor of the project for a variety of reasons.

One is jobs, another is electricity and both are something we just don't have enough of.

The Hydrogen Energy of California (HECA) project also makes sense in the current efforts to cut down on greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, by removing thousands of tons of the gas and instead burning it deep underground.

That's why the opposition from environmental groups, while predictable, is so hard to understand.

The plant will take coal and mix it with a by-product of the

oil refining process, petcoke, and into a "syngas" (which is made up of hydrogen and carbon dioxide) and use that to generate electricity, enough power to power 160,000 homes.

The vast majority of the carbon dioxide (90 percent) will be captured and then transported to the nearby Elk Hills oilfield where it will be pumped underground under high pressure to help recover more oil.

The carbon dioxide, instead of being left free in the atmosphere, will be stored safely thousands of feet underground.

The plant will also create several hundred jobs in the area, steady jobs that we need to help cushion our economy in these uncertain times.

Hydrogen energy is a win-win proposition that makes a lot of sense. It is a step forward in energy generation and in the ongoing efforts to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. It also means more jobs and reliable jobs for an area where we are often too dependent on the rising and falling fortunes of the oil industry.

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