



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

TOMMY WELLS
Councilmember – Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on Public Works and Transportation

Committee Member
Human Services
Government Operations and Environment
Health
Aging and Community Affairs

December 17, 2012

Stephen S. Ours
Chief, Permitting Branch, Air Quality Division
District Department of the Environment
1200 First Street NE, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Ours,

I write to join the growing voice of concern from neighbors, health experts, local businesses and environmental leaders in opposition of any permits that would allow the Capitol Power Plant to continue, and potentially expand pollution emissions. My concerns fall into two related areas: 1) immediate permitting actions that threaten to increase emissions from the plant, and 2) the ongoing and inappropriate use of coal as a fuel.

Regarding the immediate permit proposal, I have received conflicting information. Documents from Architect of the Capitol suggest that the changes to the plant will result in greater efficiency. Yet, the District Department of Environment (DDOE) public hearing notice states that the proposed installations “will likely result in increased emissions from the facility.” This is not acceptable. I oppose any action that will increase emissions from the facility.

Regarding the use of coal, the Capitol Power Plant emits more soot and smog forming pollution than any other pollution source in the District – largely because it is the only facility in the District that burns coal.

In 2009, positive steps were taken to reduce coal use at the plant. However, it appears many of those advances have been undermined and coal use is as prominent as ever. I am concerned that the permits under consideration by DDOE would relax air pollution standards and threaten the health of nearby residents in their homes, at public parks and local schools, and along neighboring small business corridors.

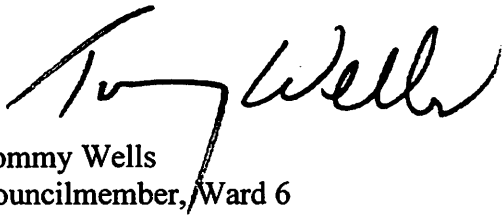
As noted by DDOE, the permits allow an increase in the emissions from portions of the plant. While the permits would also seek to place a cap on the amount of emission increase, DDOE should be aware that any increase will have a significant and negative impact on the quality of

life and health for the surrounding neighborhood. Fine particulates create significant health hazards to children in the area; an estimated 11.8% of DC children suffer from asthma, compared with 8.8% of children nationally -- and a recent RAND Health analysis reveals that asthma rates among children in some DC neighborhoods are over 15%.

While the plant has made limited improvements to increase the share of natural gas used a fuel source, coal has remained in the mix and the Capitol has shown little in the way of leadership and vision to move toward a more sustainable source of energy. The result is that a polluting power plant remains a fixture in the middle of a residential and urban neighborhood and the air quality in the surrounding community is jeopardized.

I am opposed to any action that increases air pollution related to the Capitol Power Plant -- especially as it relates to the continued use of burning coal as fuel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tommy Wells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tommy Wells
Councilmember, Ward 6