

CHIPMILL MISLED COUNCIL – GREENS

Bega Valley Shire Greens Councillor Keith Hughes has accused Eden woodchip mill managers of misleading Council over emissions from the proposed wood fired power station for the chipmill.

Councillor Hughes says that when South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) General Manager, Peter Mitchell addressed council on the proposed plant on 26 August 2008, he stated that there would be “no emissions.”

Less than a month later, Mr Mitchell told visiting Greens MP Lee Rhiannon that the emissions would meet State Government guidelines set by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

“This is a much weaker position than that outlined to council by Mr Mitchell,” according to Councillor Hughes.

In March, the Minister for Planning decided that she would become the approval authority for the project under Section 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act).

“This process seems to have revealed a further weakening of environmental safeguards,” he says.

In a document submitted by SEFE and now available from the Department of Planning website, the company admits there will be both gaseous and particulate emissions.

Its own “Preliminary Environmental Assessment” SEFE acknowledges that “the proposed power station will emit the products of combustion through an exhaust stack. The emissions will largely comprise carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides (NOx) and minor amounts of particulates and smoke.”

Councillor Hughes says that research from other countries shows that some highly toxic emissions are likely to result from wood fired power generation.

“Emissions such as dioxin, lead, mercury, arsenates and rotten egg gas are either highly injurious to human health or unpleasant smells,” Councillor Hughes says.

“I want the chipmill to come clean on exactly what chemicals it plans to emit into the air,” Councillor Hughes says.

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