

Proposed BEC Wilson City Power Plant: The Facts

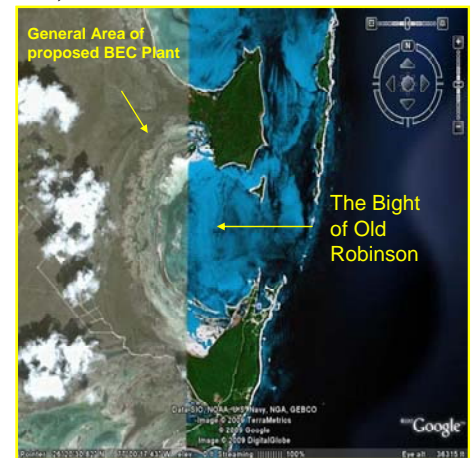
The new plant BEC is building at the Wilson City site is slated to use Bunker C fuel to run the generators. The plant is located inland, but will have a fuel transfer depot on the coast.

What is Bunker C Fuel? (Also known as: Heavy oil, residual oil, #6 oil)

"Bunker C" fuel oil is a term which has been used for many years to designate the most thick and sticky of the residual fuels. It is the lowest grade fuel there is and once used it has to be disposed of - or stored forever - as it cannot be recycled.

Do you remember stepping in tar on the beaches of Abaco in the 1960's - 1980's? That was Bunker C oil that was washed from fuel tanks of passing oil tankers and cruise ships.

Bunker C is currently being used in the Clifton Pier Power Plant in New Providence.



Potential Health Implications and Environmental Consequences

- **Potential oil spills at the transfer station**, polluting the Bight of Old Robinson, The Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park and surrounding areas, which hurts fishing and tourism. Toxic oil spills on land at the power plant site are equally as dangerous as they can pollute our fresh water supply.
- **Toxic air emissions**. Air pollution can travel for many miles affecting surrounding communities and other nearby islands. The plant is located south east of farmland, well fields, the marls and several major communities in Central Abaco. Predominant south east winds mean that emissions will be directed towards those sensitive areas and even Marsh Harbour will be affected when the wind blows toward the North.
- **Acid rain**. When Bunker C fuel is burned and toxic emissions are released, they gather in the atmosphere. When those toxic gases are combined with water in the atmosphere, they will become acids and will be returned to the land in the form of acid rain.
- **Acid Rain could affect rain water collection** as well as our drinking water supply, farms, and maintenance of houses, cars and other equipment.
- **Large amount of carbon emissions**. Countries around the world are attempting to reduce the amount of green house gases they omit, in an attempt to stop global warming, which will cause rising sea level, a disastrous prospect for island nations like The Bahamas. Oil fired power plants, such as the proposed plant at Wilson City, are one of the most polluting energy forms that exists.
- **Cancer causing**. Compounds in Bunker C fuel emissions can be linked to cancer.

Is this a long term solution?

- Bunker C is the least expensive form of oil, yet it produces less energy per gallon than diesel. It is the least desired fuel internationally due to pollution concerns. With the rest of the world moving away from "residual oils" this form of energy production is becoming globally obsolete.
- Other countries have recognized that heavy oil power plants are big polluters and expensive to maintain and operate and as a result are looking at cleaner fossil fuels and alternative energies.

Will the new plant decrease Abaco's energy bills?

- According to law (Chapter 194, Section 21):
 - BEC's charges for electricity may be fixed at different rates for different locations, "but no undue preference shall be given to any locality".
 - BEC's rating for electricity charges is based on payments they have to make for salaries, pensions, remunerations, superannuation allowances and gratuities, working expenses as well as any interest or payments due on loans that BEC has made. (laws.bahamas.gov.bs)
- It was announced in June 2009 that BEC needs 512 million dollars (\$512,000,000) in order to pay their debts, keep the corporation running and support projects in progress, and the power plant at Wilson City is projected to cost approximately 105 million dollars.
- That means your power bill will likely include these costs.
- The extra costs associated with special equipment and procedures required to use Bunker C will reduce the actual cost savings gained by the difference in fuel price.
- Environmental cleanup and a reduction in tourism could cost Abaco in other ways.

Solutions?

- Choose a location that has less impact on the environment and tourism. Snake Cay, for example, which is likely to become an industrialized port in the near future. (In order to have only one industrial port rather than two in the same area).
- Explore alternative fuel or energy sources (diesel, LNG, Waste to Energy, solar, wind)
- Demand that the public be involved in choices that Abaco will have to live with for decades.

For More information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuel_oil

<http://www.laohamutuk.org/Oil/Power/NTNHeavyOilMar09.pdf>

<http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs>

http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/book_shelf/30_mangrove_chapter3.pdf

What can you do?

Contact the General Manager of BEC, Ministers responsible for BEC, and your MP and tell them how you feel about the government building a Bunker C power plant at Wilson City. Attend all public meetings on the topic to help inform yourself and others and voice your concerns.

Hon. Phenton O. Neymour, MP
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Nassau, The Bahamas

Fredrick Gottlieb, Executive Chairman
or
Kevin Basden, General Manager
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P.O. Box N-7509
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Prime Minister and North Abaco MP:
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Public Meeting
September 10th, 2009
Place and Time TBA
Ferry Transport will be available
Call 367-2721 for more info