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COMMITTEES:
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOMELAND SECURITY

May 20, 2011

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson
US Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building - Room 3000
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I am writing today in reference to a major project in the district I represent, the Las Brisas Energy Center (LBEC). LBEC is a proposed 1320 megawatt electric-power generating station to be built in an industrial area on the north side of the Corpus Christi Inner Harbor. After LBEC received its final permit from state regulators, some at the EPA Regional office hinted that the project might have to begin the permitting process again due to new regulations regarding greenhouse gas emissions – regulations not applicable to LBEC given its procedural status. An unambiguous statement from you clearing up any regulatory uncertainty would allow work to begin on this project, creating thousands of much needed jobs.

One of the reasons that fast and appropriate action from EPA is necessary for LBEC is the profound impact the project will have on industrial employment in the Corpus Christi area. LBEC represents a $3.2 billion investment – the largest in our community's history. It has been estimated that LBEC will have a substantial economic impact over its first ten years, including over $900 million in local spending and $400 million in new local tax revenues for our schools and hospitals. Most importantly, it will create almost 4000 jobs over its 4 to 5 year construction period.

Some have expressed concerns that LBEC or any major new industrial facility may affect the attainment status for air quality in Corpus Christi. While I agree that we should be vigilant in protecting our environment and natural resources, I am told that LBEC will use state-of-the-art, highly clean and efficient circulating fluidized bed technology. Further, reviews from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M – Kingsville, and the technical committees of Port Industries of Corpus Christi all have found that LBEC would not cause or contribute to any change in attainment status.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you on efforts to make LBEC a reality while fully protecting the health, environment and economy of Corpus Christi and the surrounding area.

Very truly yours,

Blake Farenthold

Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress