

# FAQs Re: LADWP's Scattergood Power Plant Modernization Project

The Scattergood Generating Station in El Segundo is a methane gas power plant owned by LADWP. By 2029, LADWP plans to convert Scattergood to burn a methane/hydrogen blend, with hopes to eventually burn 100% hydrogen gas.

A coalition of environmental and community groups are opposing the [Draft Environmental Impact Report](#) (DEIR) for the Scattergood conversion project. Their concerns include the project's **exorbitant costs, pollution concerns, water supply impacts, and failures to address community concerns or consider more sustainable alternatives.**

---

## What will this project cost?

According to a presentation to the City Council, the first phase of the proposed Scattergood Modernization project is **estimated to cost \$800 million**. This cost does not include future retrofits needed to be able to burn 100% hydrogen, the cost of hydrogen fuel itself, or the hydrogen production and transportation infrastructure. These additional costs have not been quantified by LADWP.

## Where will LADWP get its hydrogen?

**We don't know, and neither does LADWP.** LADWP assumes it will be able to purchase hydrogen gas on the open market and has mentioned interest in utilizing the proposed [Angeles Link green hydrogen pipeline](#) in Southern California. The problem is that it is not guaranteed that this pipeline will ever exist or that it will only deliver green hydrogen.

## How will this project affect air quality for local communities?

LADWP anticipates **"significant and unavoidable impacts" regarding air quality** and pollutants from this project. Burning hydrogen is known to produce air pollution by emitting nitrogen oxides—a key ingredient in smog—potentially exacerbating respiratory and heart problems for nearby residents. The Scattergood region already exceeds both national and statewide limits for ozone pollution. Even if transformed to a plant fully powered by hydrogen, this project would place a significant burden on surrounding communities. Scattergood is located in a state-designated disadvantaged community, characterized by high pollution burden (97th percentile) and low population count.

## Does this project align with LA's ambitious climate goals?

**No.** To create hydrogen gas, heavily purified water must go through an energy-intensive process called electrolysis. This means that even 'green' hydrogen requires significant amounts of water and energy. LADWP envisions using 100% hydrogen fuel at Scattergood by 2035. However, it is unclear whether the technology and sufficient sources of renewable energy will be available to produce enough green hydrogen in that timeframe. There is a good chance the project will require polluting 'grey' hydrogen made from fossil fuels to create the

hydrogen that will be needed to run the plant. If LADWP uses grey hydrogen, that would negate any potential emissions reductions from the project. What's more, **many of the most enthusiastic advocates for hydrogen technology come from the fossil fuel industry—who see hydrogen as a way to ensure continued dependence on fossil fuel infrastructure.**

## **How would this project affect water security in the LA region?**

Hydrogen gas is a fuel source produced from water electrolysis. This process would divert large volumes of water away from uses like drinking, bathing, and other household and industrial needs. As LADWP and other water agencies are finally starting to pivot toward making local water supplies more reliable and resilient to climate change, it simply makes no sense to plan to use these precious supplies for generating power when there are other more sustainable options available.

## **What has LADWP done to develop this plan for modernizing the Scattergood Power Plant?**

LADWP has had over a decade to plan for Scattergood's modernization. Despite ample time, LADWP has asked for extensions to its compliance date and is now pushing forward with an incomplete project idea to meet that extended deadline. LADWP's DEIR **failed to seriously consider the harms this project will cause.** It has also failed to develop a list of viable alternatives to the proposed plan that would have fewer impacts on public health and water supplies, which community organizations and other advocates have been requesting for years.

## **What has LADWP done to develop this plan for modernizing the Scattergood Power Plant?**

Advocates want to be sure that LADWP adequately studies alternatives so that it can use this facility in a way that meets the region's energy needs while having the least impact on public health. There are proven, existing technologies that are effective in creating a just transition to clean energy and that also avoid the serious downsides of hydrogen combustion. LADWP should consider alternatives including responsibly-sited solar and wind projects, hydrogen fuel cells, distributed energy resources like rooftop solar paired with batteries, and safe and reliable grid-scale battery energy storage systems before deciding on the best path forward for this facility. In addition to new technology, investments in energy efficiency and [demand response programs](#) can play a critical role in decreasing energy demand, which helps meet local energy needs without compromising our air quality or water supplies.

### **For more information, contact:**

Julia Dowell, Senior Organizer with Sierra Club, [julia.dowell@sierraclub.org](mailto:julia.dowell@sierraclub.org)

Benjamin Harris, Senior Staff Attorney with Los Angeles Waterkeeper, [ben@lawaterkeeper.org](mailto:ben@lawaterkeeper.org)