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EPA Issues First Greenhouse Gas Permit in Texas

(DALLAS – Nov. 10, 2011) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the first Texas Greenhouse Gas (GHG) permit for the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Thomas C. Ferguson Power Plant in Llano County, Texas. LCRA is modernizing and expanding its plant by replacing its 37 year old unit with a new more efficient and reliable natural gas powered unit.

“The new LCRA plant will use improved environmental controls and install modern high efficiency equipment,” said EPA Regional Administrator Al Armendariz. “LCRA is leading the way by providing Texans an efficient and reliable source of clean power.”

LCRA is the first company in Texas to complete the GHG permit process and obtained a final permit in about 8 months. Earlier this year, the company proposed to replace an old 440 megawatt electricity generating boiler with a new reliable 590 megawatt combined cycle gas-fired plant. The new plant relies on an advanced electric power generation system that reduces nitrogen oxide emissions and also includes advanced environmental monitoring of GHG emissions.

“We appreciated EPA’s work on our project,” said LCRA General Manager Becky Motal. “We believe that replacing our aging Thomas C. Ferguson Power Plant with this new combined-cycle natural gas plant benefits everyone. The region will benefit from the latest environmental controls and our customers will benefit from our ability to better manage costs with a plant that will use about 35 to 40 percent less fuel than traditional gas-fired plants.”

In June 2010, EPA finalized national GHG regulations, which specify that beginning on January 2, 2011, projects that increase GHG emissions substantially will require an air permit. EPA believes states are best equipped to oversee GHG air permitting programs. In the interim, EPA is providing Texas businesses access to the permits they need to meet the GHG requirements and continue to grow.

The EPA is currently reviewing ten additional GHG permit applications for Texas companies.

More about activities in EPA Region 6: <http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region6.html>

EPA audio file is available at <http://www.epa.gov/region6/6xa/podcast/nov2011.html>

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