

Actors Allegedly Paid to Support New Orleans Power Plant

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Global Research, May 09, 2018

[OilPrice.com](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

Actors have been hired and paid to sit through public hearings for a proposed power plant in New Orleans, [The Lens reports](#), citing interviews with some of the actors and screenshots of Facebook messages about the acting gig.

According to the website, some 50 people with bright orange T-shirts turned up at the City Hall last October at a public hearing on Entergy's proposed power plant in New Orleans. At least four people were hired actors, and one actor said that he recognized up to 15 others who work in the local film industry.

Each of the actors was paid [\\$60](#) per meeting for meetings between October and February, according to Facebook messages provided to The Lens. There were also 'speaking roles' for the actors that paid [\\$200](#).

Three of the actors agreed to talk to The Lens and provide evidence that there were being paid in cash to show support for the power plant. Actors were asked to sign non-disclosure agreements, told not to speak to media, and were told not to tell anyone that they were being paid to go to the public hearings.

The practice to hire paid support for something to make it look authentic, known as astroturfing, is not technically illegal.

"They paid us to sit through the meeting and clap every time someone said something against wind and solar power," Keith Keough, who heard about the acting job through a friend, told The Lens, adding that he thought he would be shooting a commercial.

"I'm not political," Keough said. "I needed the money for a hotel room at that point."

In March this year, the New Orleans City Council [voted to approve](#) construction of the New Orleans Power Station, a 128-megawatt unit composed of seven natural gas-fired reciprocating engines. The plant is scheduled to come online in January 2020 and is estimated to cost around US\$210 million to build, including transmission and other project-related costs and contingency.

Referring to the report that actors were paid to support the power plant, Entergy said in a statement to [Newsweek](#):

“The recent allegations that some supporters of the New Orleans Power Station may have been paid to attend or speak at certain public meetings are troubling and run counter to the values of our company.”

“While we reiterate that Entergy did not pay, nor did we authorize any other person or entity to pay supporters to attend or speak at Council meetings, we recognize that our interactions with our stakeholders must always be based on honesty and integrity.”

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