

June 3, 2011

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Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
123 East Anapamu Street
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Dear Supervisors,

I was invited to attend a meeting that Venoco held to explain to local landowners what they are doing in the Los Alamos area of Santa Barbara County. Following are what I think are the key issues and how Venoco responded to questions. The main speaker at the meeting was Steve Greg (not sure of the spelling). Pat Moran and Steve Kirby were also there to represent Venoco along with a couple of other employees. Everything below is my paraphrasing from the meeting.

It was stated that they have done fracking with two oil wells off Highway 135. One is on the South side of the highway and the other is off Old Careaga Ranch Road on the North side of the highway (on my land).

The fracking is done by drilling a well vertically, turning horizontally, and then using high pressure water, sand, acid, and various chemicals into the pipe to crack the shale 8,000-10,000 feet below ground. After the fracking, they try to retrieve most of the water and chemicals. They cannot retrieve all of what they put into the well.

In answer to the question about which chemicals they are using, they gave us a paper with various items listed. When questioned further, it was stated that a list of all the chemicals used were posted at the site. It was stated they voluntarily gave a list of the chemicals used to the County. They said that they WILL NOT disclose exactly which chemicals were used since competitors could duplicate it across the street and get the same results. Therefore, they said that the chemicals that were used are posted at the site, were voluntarily given to the County, but at the same time, it was stated they would not disclose exactly which chemicals were used.

I need to know exactly which chemicals were used in order to test if any of those chemicals have contaminated the water

we and/or our livestock use for drinking and for irrigation of our grapes.

When asked if fracking is new, it was stated that it has been going on for 40 or 50 years. They said that while this is the first time they have fracked on land in Santa Barbara County, they had done so off shore for some years.

When asked of they had plans to frack any additional wells, they said that they have permits to add two additional wells this year and they will frack both of them. One or both are at the same site as the well off Old Careaga Ranch Road.

I asked where the water came from that they used in the fracking process and the reply was that it came from the water well in the strawberry field off Old Careaga Ranch Road and Highway 135. This is land contiguous to our ranch that I owned with Linda Thompson and Charlie and Tiffany Widle until April 26, 2011. I question whether Venoco ever asked permission to utilize water from this water well.

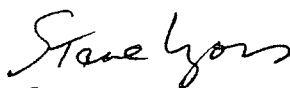
Venoco said that the well on the North side of Highway 135 (opposite the well they fracked on) was a disposal well in which they inject wastewater. I asked exactly where that wastewater came from and what was in the water. The answer was that it was water that comes up with the oil they obtain from the oil wells.

Someone stated that when driving by the fracked oil well on the South side of Highway 135, the fumes were so bad that is almost caused his child and himself to vomit. Venoco said that the fumes were not harmful.

My biggest concern is that they are injecting harmful chemicals into the ground below our source of drinking water and the water we use to irrigate our grapes. Obviously, this is a huge health concern with potential catastrophic consequences. My other concern is the amount of water that they are removing from our water table and our subsequent water supply. If our water becomes contaminated with harmful chemicals or if our wells run dry, in addition to the potential serious health risks, our ranch, our vineyard, and our home become worthless.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,


Steven Lyons