

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Villalobos, David
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2020 3:50 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Pfeifer, Kathy
Subject: FW: CEC urges approval of the Strauss Wind Project
Attachments: CEC Comments on Strauss Wind Energy Project BOS.pdf

From: Michael Chiacos <mchiacos@cecmail.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2020 3:23 PM
To: Williams, Das <DWilliams@countyofsb.org>; Hart, Gregg <gHart@countyofsb.org>; Hartmann, Joan <jHartmann@countyofsb.org>; Adam, Peter <peter.adam@countyofsb.org>; Lavagnino, Steve <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>
Cc: Villalobos, David <dvillalo@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Pfeifer, Kathy <Kathypm@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>; Sigrid Wright <swright@cecmail.org>
Subject: CEC urges approval of the Strauss Wind Project

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Dear Honorable Supervisors,

Please see the attached letter from the Community Environmental Council, urging the Board to deny the three appeals and approve the Strauss Wind Energy Project.

Best regards,

-Michael

Michael Chiacos

Director of Energy and Climate Programs

[Community Environmental Council](#)

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Community Environmental Council creates regional solutions to climate change.



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January 23rd, 2020

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Strauss Wind Energy Project: **SUPPORT**

Dear Honorable Supervisors,

The Community Environmental Council (CEC) supports renewable energy growth in the County of Santa Barbara and urges the Board of Supervisors to deny the appeals on the Strauss Wind Energy Project. Staff has thoroughly investigated the appeal issues, found them meritless, and recommends their denial.

Given the recent approval of the Strategic Energy Plan and the aggressive goals of the Energy and Climate Action Plan, it is clear that the County has invested significant resources into planning for renewable energy growth. The Strauss Wind Energy Project proposal presents an excellent opportunity for the County to demonstrate action on climate goals, and to double the amount of renewable energy generation in the county.

Santa Barbara County mostly relies on electricity generated by sources from outside our region. The Strauss project is designed to generate enough electricity to supply approximately 44,700 homes annually. It is important for our county to develop more renewable generating capacity, not only because our ECAP goals require it, but also because of our geographic position at the end of both PG&E and SCE's power grids, and associated vulnerability to long term power outages.

Santa Barbara County has some of the lowest wind energy production in the state. We need to do our part to ensure that California meets our goal of 60% renewable electricity by 2030 and 100% clean electricity by 2045. Currently, the only utility scale renewable energy projects in the county are a 40 megawatt solar farm in Cuyama and a 28 megawatt solar farm in Vandenberg. The county also has 64.4 megawatts in 8,651 projects of distributed (i.e. rooftop) solar.

Wind power is a crucial element in balancing our electrical grid because unlike solar, it can be produced in the evenings, when the sun is down. Wind turbines use no water to generate carbon-free electricity.

In addition, the project will:

- Avoid as much as 73,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year, equivalent to the emissions of 14,600 average cars.
- Provide an estimated \$40 million in tax revenue over the project's 30 year life.
- Create 100 temporary construction jobs and 5-7 permanent jobs.
- Allow local ranchers to continue agricultural operations while receiving a supplemental income stream.

Like any energy project, wind projects have detrimental impacts, but CEC believes that the project's benefits greatly outweigh these. The modified final project that CEC supports includes micro-siting turbines and active management to reduce impacts to birds, reducing oak tree removal by 87%, and requiring that 10 oaks be planted for each one removed. While we are strong supporters of energy efficiency and distributed solar energy, utility scale projects like Strauss are needed if we are to quickly reduce emissions in face of the climate crisis.

We have visceral, recent experience with the impacts of climate change in Santa Barbara County, which has seen significant wildlife and plant deaths from climate change exacerbated heat, drought, and wildfire. **We ask the Board of Supervisors to deny the appeals and to approve the Strauss project, which has already been vetted by the community in previous iterations, and will be a crucial step forward for the County to reduce climate change pollutants.**

The careful development of renewable energy projects within Santa Barbara County is critical to reducing our electricity related greenhouse gas emissions, supporting the local economy, and ensuring our energy resilience. We urge the Board to support this project that was already approved by the Board of Supervisors a decade ago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sigrid Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sigrid Wright
Executive Director/CEO