

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Heal the Ocean

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From: Karina Johnston <karina@healtheocean.org>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 12:30 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Noah Boland
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 25-00921 - Board of Supervisors Hearing (10/21/25)
Attachments: HTO_PublicComment_Agenda Item_25-00921_10-20-2025.pdf

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Hello County Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a public comment on Agenda Item 25-00921 for the County Board of Supervisors hearing to be held on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

Please find Heal the Ocean's public comment letter attached, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

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Karina Johnston | *Executive Director*

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October 17, 2025

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E Anapamu Street, 4th Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Agenda Item 25-00921 – Hearing on October 21, 2025

Subject: Strong Support for Framework to Phase Out Oil and Gas Operations

Dear Chair and Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Heal the Ocean strongly supports the County staff recommendation under Agenda Item 25-00921 and urges the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Authorize staff's two-step plan to phase out oil and gas operations—by beginning the development of an ordinance to prohibit new oil and gas wells and initiating an amortization study for the phaseout of existing facilities; and
2. Add this work to the Long-Range Planning Annual Work Program for Fiscal Year 2025–2026.

This initiative is a matter of environmental necessity and public health, climate responsibility, and water protection for the residents of Santa Barbara County.

Our community deserves clean air. Many local oil projects—including those using high-pollution techniques like steam injection—are among the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the County. Reducing and ultimately phasing out these operations is essential to protect the health of our residents and to do our part in the global fight against climate change.

Oil and gas operations also threaten our clean water supplies. The injection of toxic wastewater underground puts groundwater at risk—especially in North County. In Cat Canyon alone, a state study identified 291 oil wells that could potentially contaminate the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, a vital source of drinking water for nearly 190,000 people. Protecting our water means acting now to phase out these hazardous activities.

This action has precedent. The County has already taken steps to phase out fossil fuel infrastructure—most notably through the shutdown of the Ellwood Onshore Facility and planning

by Chevron to decommission their oil and gas facilities in Santa Barbara County. Those processes, developed with legal, fiscal, and community considerations in mind, serve as a model for the action proposed today.

New state legislation that took effect this year provides the County with the legal authority to adopt an ordinance phasing out oil and gas operations to protect public health and the environment. The County has the tools—and now is the time to use them.

We thank you for your leadership and for your attention to the long-term protection of our coast, climate, and communities. We urge you to adopt the staff recommendation and move this critical work forward without delay.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karina Johnston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Karina Johnston
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