



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Public Health
Department No.: 041
For Agenda Of: 05/15/18 Set Hearing
06/05/18 First Reading
(Departmental)
06/19/18 Second
Reading
(Administrative)
Placement: Set Hearing
Estimated Time: 06/05/18 30 Min
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Dr. Van Do-Reynoso, MPH, PhD
Director(s) Director, Public Health Dept.
Contact Info: Larry Fay, 346-8463
Director, Environmental Health Services
SUBJECT: Ordinance Amending Chapter 34A - Wells

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors consider the following recommendations:

On May 15, 2018, set a public hearing on the Departmental Agenda of June 5, 2018 to consider on Ordinance amending Chapter 34A of the County Code.

On June 5, 2018:

- a) Approve the introduction (First Reading) of an Ordinance amending Chapter 34A to add provisions to monitor and control the release of hydrogen sulfide gas;
- b) Read the title of the Ordinance into the record and waive full reading of the Ordinance; and
- c) Continue the Chapter 34A Ordinance amendment on the Administrative Agenda for June 19, 2018 to consider recommendations.

On June 19, 2018:

- a) Approve and adopt (Second Reading) an Ordinance amending Chapter 34A to add provisions to monitor and control the release of hydrogen sulfide gas from wells in unincorporated areas of the county, with an effective date of July 19, 2018.
- b) Determine that adoption of the ordinance is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 14 CCR § 15308, since this action is for the protection of the environment, and 14 CCR § 15061(b)(3), since it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant impact on the environment, and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption (Attachment D).

Summary Text:

This item is on the Agenda to adopt an ordinance to amend Chapter 34A of the County Code. This chapter regulates the construction, modification, repair and destruction of wells in the unincorporated areas of the county. The proposed ordinance would add provisions to monitor and control the release of hydrogen sulfide gas with requirements that include: a hydrogen sulfide meter be kept on site and used during well drilling activities; specified agencies be notified if hydrogen sulfide gas is released and that measures to stop the release be implemented; and the Administrative Authority be notified if unanticipated conditions in the field require that the well be constructed in a manner significantly different (i.e., deeper) than the specifications listed on the permit application.

Background:

Groundwater levels have dropped significantly in Santa Barbara County as a result of the recent unprecedented drought. Many wells have experienced a decrease in water production, or in some cases, failed completely. As a result, new wells are being drilled deeper than they might have been in the past to ensure a stable and long-term supply of water.

The construction of an exceptionally deep well in the Goleta area in 2016 resulted in the artesian flow of water with a significant concentration of hydrogen sulfide leading to the release of hydrogen sulfide gas. The “rotten-egg” smell of the gas travelled off site and into the nearby residential neighborhoods, resulting in complaints of burning eyes and difficulty in breathing, and many people evacuating their homes. The release of hydrogen sulfide from a source that was unknown at the time brought this issue to the attention of the County, City of Goleta and residents.

The proposed ordinance would require that a properly maintained and calibrated hydrogen sulfide gas meter be kept onsite and in operation during drilling activities. Should hydrogen sulfide gas be encountered, at a specified concentration for a specified time period, the operator is to notify Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services, the Air Pollution Control District and the Office of Emergency Services. Prompt and effective mitigations measures are to be initiated should the odor drift to, or beyond, the property line. The monitoring and reporting requirements are safeguards to ensure appropriate response to protect the health of the community.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Adopting the proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 34A will not have any fiscal, facility or staffing impacts.

Special Instructions:

- A. That the Clerk of the Board publish notice of this hearing pursuant to Section 6066 of the Government Code, per the attached Public Notice, in a newspaper of general circulation in Santa Barbara County 10 days prior to the hearing and again 5 days prior to the hearing.
- B. That the Clerk of the Board publish the ordinance within 15 days of its adoption.
- C. That the Clerk of the Board return one original adopted Ordinance and one Minute Order to Public Health by emailing PHDcu@sbcphd.org requesting pick-up.

Attachments:

- A. Ordinance to amend Chapter 34A of the County Code - Final
- B. Proposed changes to Chapter 34A - Redline
- C. Public Notice
- D. Notice of CEQA Exemption
- E. Presentation

Authored by:

David Brummond, Supervising Environmental Health Specialist, 346-7348