

# COLAB

The Coalition of Labor, Agriculture & Business

5/30/2019

Santa Barbara County Supervisors

Re: Agenda Item #A-3

June 4, 2019 Meeting

Delivered via email to Clerk of the Board

Dear Chairman Lavagnino and Members of the Board,

On behalf of COLAB, I am asking you to withdraw the proposed endorsement of the New Green Deal for the following legal, ethical and economic reasons.

As elected officials, you have a legal and ethical duty to consider the merits of each individual project that comes before you on the basis of the law. This includes the commitment to hear and judge projects without prejudice and to make your determination in accordance of the rights of the project applicants whose projects comport to industry standards and reasonable interpretations of our land use codes and CEQA.

We are of the firm opinion that the resolution, in light of the comments made by Supervisors Hartmann and Williams reflecting their intentions of the same at your hearing of May 21, 2019, serve to manifest a bias and predetermined prejudice against pending project applications especially those having to do with the oil industry. Moreover, in the context of the New Green Deal, it makes no sense to not support these local projects for three reasons.

First, the 10-12-year time frame espoused by the New Green Deal by which time we are supposed to be completely weaned off of fossil fuels is completely impossible as the technology and infrastructure required to do so would not be available in that time frame.

Second, even if America did embark on this path, it would be meaningless and superfluous because China, India and Pakistan are not committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions in the near future, if at all, and they represent more than 50% of the world's emissions.

Finally, whereas the New Green Deal calls for the elimination of the use of fossil fuels by 2030, the California state mandates towards a carbon-free energy portfolio are due to be realized in 2045, which gives us an additional fifteen years! Yet, you are considering denying oil project permit applications in the here and now? That is beyond extreme!

With regard to the ethics of this proposal and the rationale behind the same, we believe you have not demonstrated much of any willingness or fortitude to sacrifice for the stated goals of the

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resolution. Instead, the county has been mercilessly punitive towards your constituents whom you appear willing to sacrifice on this altar of climate change political correctness.

To be precise, as a Board of Supervisors, you have not been willing to spend much of any money from the general fund or reserves in order to radically reduce the carbon footprint of your own operations. Instead, you have relied on ratepayer increases as it affects the carbon digester at Tajiguas, the only significant project thus far approved, at the tremendous cost of over \$100 million. But, when it comes to dipping into your own funds to build utility scale solar, or to replace your entire fleet of vehicles, you have balked, banking your hopes on skimming off profits from a Community Choice Energy program scam to fund the same, again, at the expense of your constituents.

The presupposition you are acting upon posits that the only money you have to spend must come from additional revenues expropriated from your constituents. That is, you are not willing to cut costs here or there, from your existing budget, to pay for your own pipe dreams.

On the other hand, you expect the private sector, both individuals and businesses, to cough up the money as if the expense of the New Green Deal is something they must be able to afford. Lost on the proponents of the New Green Deal is that most businesses operate on the slimmest of margins, 3-5%, while most households in America are living paycheck to paycheck, or worse, they are bridging their finances from month to month by way of their credit cards!

With respect to your stated predilection to prejudge the oil projects that are coming before you, please consider mineral rights and zoning rights! As it pertains to ExxonMobil, they have an existing permit to operate their facility and to transport their oil. As it pertains to the various onshore projects, they have a right to mine and produce these resources. Please do not forget that some of our farming and ranching families are also dependent on this income stream in their capacity as mineral rights owners! In the event you choose to deny these companies the opportunity to continue their operations, you should be held liable for a takings!

Finally, as the fiduciary stewards of county finances, you have a moral and ethical duty to balance the county budget. You understand you are in arrears by over \$1 billion dollars including pension and infrastructure debt. The oil industry is one of the highest taxpayers in our region and it pays the highest wages.

According to County records, North County has been hard hit by the closure of the All-American Pipeline and the ExxonMobil facility. Vista del Mar School is bankrupt. Santa Ynez High School has experienced huge revenue cuts. Hancock College's tax revenues to fund their bonds were cut as were the tax revenues to support the Lompoc Hospital. We're living in a tale of two counties, yet South County Supervisors remain oblivious to the needs of the North County. It is unconscionable the board continues to ignore the fact that the North County does

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not have the same property tax base or economic wherewithal as the South County. We need these projects and this industry.

For all these reasons, we ask that you decline to hear this resolution and prepare instead to give future project applicants the fair hearing they deserve, respecting their rights in the process, as you forego the temptation to engage in meaningless and irrelevant virtue signaling as it pertains to GLOBAL greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. This is not just about oil. There are plenty of other industries in this county that should get the boot if you hold true to the Green New Deal, including among others, all concrete and asphalt operations. As we have pointed out previously, the county uses all these products every day...we suggest you wean yourselves off before you cut off the supply of the same and that holds true to oil and gas products too!

Finally, please consider giving due credit (a resolution perhaps?) to the oil and gas industry as the free market shift, rather than punitive and ridiculous regulations, to natural gas from coal is the ONLY reason America is the one major industrialized nation in the world that has accomplished a significant reduction of our greenhouse gas emissions! Moreover, the focus of your efforts to save the world from climate change should be focused on the nations of China, India and Pakistan, who are responsible for the lion's share of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. Apart from them, absolutely nothing we do here is going to make a difference because they are not following your "lead".

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Andy Caldwell  
Executive Director  
COLAB