

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

#3

From: Bryant Baker <bryant@lpfw.org>
Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:41 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Jeff Kuyper; Rebecca August
Subject: March 8 BOS Meeting - Item #3 - ExxonMobil Trucking Permit Comments
Attachments: 20220307_LPFW_Exxon Trucking Proposal Comments.pdf

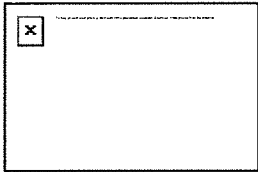


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Good afternoon,

Please find attached Los Padres ForestWatch's comments on Item #3 for tomorrow's Board of Supervisors hearing.

Thank you,



Bryant Baker M.S.
Conservation Director
 Los Padres ForestWatch

Pronouns: he / him
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 Protecting the Los Padres National Forest, the Carrizo Plain National Monument,
 and other public lands along California's Central Coast.





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March 7, 2022

Supervisor Joan Hartmann, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
c/o Clerk of the Board, sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Re: Item 3 - ExxonMobil Interim Trucking for SYU Phased Restart Project (17RVP-00000-00081; SCH# 2018061035; Case No. 19EIR-00000-00001) - DENY

Dear Chair Hartmann and Supervisors:

Los Padres ForestWatch requests that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors follow the recommendations by the Planning Commission and deny ExxonMobil's proposal to truck oil products from the southern Santa Barbara County coastline to the Santa Maria Pump Station and Pentland Terminal using a dangerous route along U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 166. This proposal, which would restart the Hondo, Harmony, and Heritage platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel, will put people, wildlife, waterways, and public lands at risk.

ForestWatch is a nonprofit conservation organization based in Santa Barbara that has over 27,000 members, supporters, and followers in the region. Since 2004 the organization has been dedicated to protecting the Los Padres National Forest and other public lands in Santa Barbara County and adjacent counties.

As the proposed trucking route includes the portion of State Route 166 that traverses the Sierra Madre Mountains in the Los Padres National Forest, as well as the Cuyama River valley corridor adjacent to the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve and Carrizo Plain National Monument, there is a serious risk to local public lands that provide habitat for dozens of native plants and wildlife while also offering recreation opportunities for Santa Barbara County and surrounding area residents.

Increased heavy truck traffic along Highway 166 will significantly impact outdoor recreation opportunities in these public lands accessed via this corridor. Several

trailheads are located directly adjacent to the highway (see Figures 1 and 2 for examples), and we have serious public safety concerns as the public enters and exits these trailheads located along small dirt turnouts along the shoulder of the highway. Blind curves and high speeds already make access to and from these trailheads extremely dangerous, and this unsafe condition is exacerbated by existing truck traffic along the highway. Adding even more trucks will only compound this unsafe condition, will discourage rather than encourage the public from using these trailheads, and will negatively affect the outdoor recreation experience for visitors to these areas. These trailheads all service underserved communities in the Santa Maria area, and we need to be looking at programs that encourage and facilitate access to these trails. Projects like this that make trailheads less safe, pleasant, and inviting will only serve to discourage use and will have a disparate impact on communities that already lack equitable access to trails and open space.

Approximately 8.6 miles of the proposed trucking route is within the Los Padres National Forest administrative boundary, bisecting the Santa Lucia Ranger District that spans the Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo County line. Three national forest trailheads are located along State Route 166 in this area:

1. Willow Springs Trailhead
2. Adobe Trailhead
3. Gifford Trailhead

Three popular roads that provide access into the national forest also intersect the proposed trucking route:

1. Pine Canyon Road
2. Sierra Madre Road (Forest Route 32513)
3. Cable Corral Road (Forest Route 30502)

All of these trails and roads provide important access to recreation areas within the Los Padres National Forest—including areas such Horseshoe Springs Campground, La Brea Creek, Buckhorn Ridge, Logan Ridge, Rock Front Off-Highway Vehicle Area, Miranda Pine Mountain, and other trails and campgrounds within the Sierra Madre Mountains. The proposed trucking route within the Los Padres National Forest is also one of the primary areas that provides access to the San Rafael Wilderness to the east. Furthermore, legislation¹ that has been passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and is awaiting a vote in the U.S. Senate would add additional federally designated wilderness in this area, which would be added to the existing San Rafael Wilderness south and east of the proposed trucking route. In fact, the Moon Canyon Unit of the proposed San Rafael Wilderness expansion is approximately 0.75 miles from the proposed trucking route.

Approximately 6.5 miles of the proposed trucking route transects or is adjacent to the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve, including its southern entrance. This important landscape—managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife—protects critical habitat linkages between the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The proposed trucking route is also adjacent to the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and it is less than 0.6 miles from an area within the national

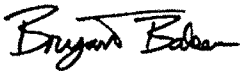
¹ Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act (H.R. 803). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/803>

monument that is proposed as new federally designated wilderness. The only access to the Carrizo Plain National Monument from Highway 166—the Caliente Mountain Trail—will also be affected by the increase in industrial truck traffic associated with this proposal.

These public lands and the Cuyama River provide important habitat for threatened, endangered, and rare species such as the southern California steelhead, California tiger salamander, arroyo toad, California condor, giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, and California red-legged frog. As displayed with the relatively recent oil tanker truck spill along State Route 166 near the Los Padres National Forest in March 2020—which spilled 4,530 gallons of oil into the Cuyama River and affected local wildlife—the proposed trucking route is already dangerous and will only be made more so by the addition of 68 oil trucks per day. The proposed trucking route crosses the Cuyama River alone at seven different locations. Dozens of fast-moving trucks along this windy, mountainous two-lane road that intersects such a critical waterway will put our local public lands, water, and wildlife at significant risk from vehicle accidents and oil spills.

We therefore urge you to deny ExxonMobil’s interim trucking permit. Such a denial is necessary for the protection of our natural and recreational resources in Santa Barbara County and a meaningful reduction in local carbon emissions over the coming decades.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryant Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bryant Baker, MS
Conservation Director
Los Padres ForestWatch

Figure 1. Adobe Trailhead and State Route 166 along the proposed trucking route.

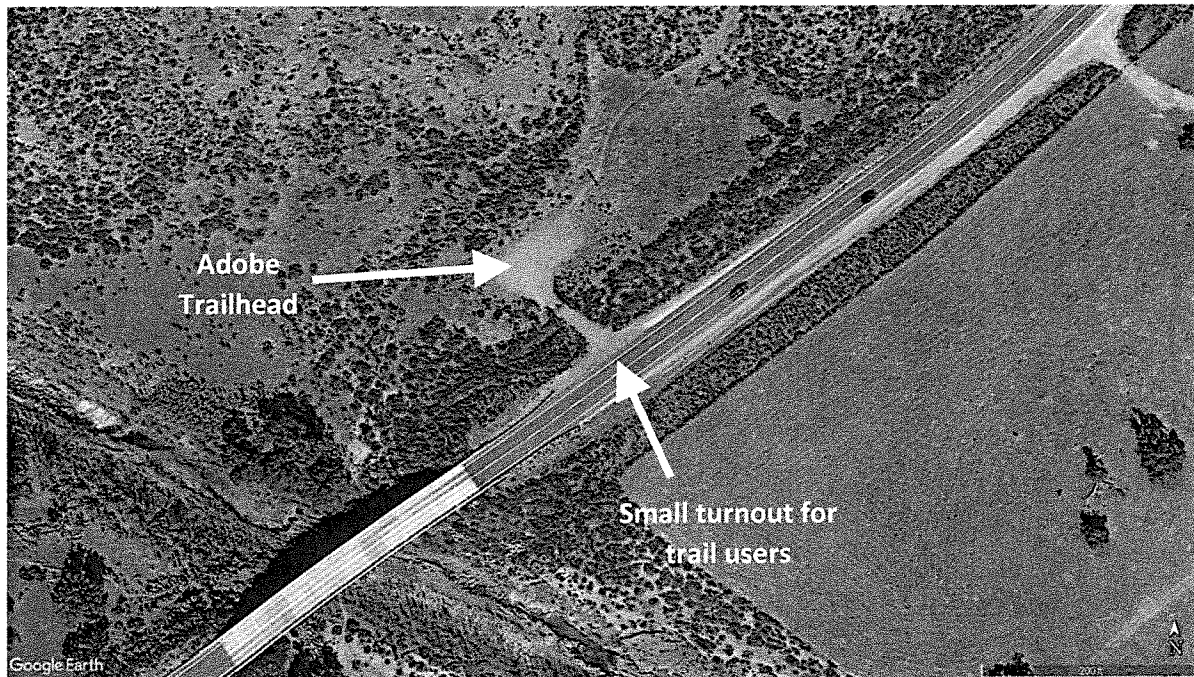


Figure 2. Adobe Trailhead turnout as seen from State Route 166 along the proposed trucking route.

