

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

# 8

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**From:** Mike Stoker <mikestoker@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 9, 2025 7:45 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Item # 8-The SBCTAC opposes the proposed ban on oil & gas production.

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**Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center**  
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***"The SBCTAC...Fighting for the Taxpayer and Helping our Business Members Succeed!"***

Dear Chairwoman Capps & Honorable Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of over 300 members, the Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center (SBCTAC), urges you to reject the proposed ban on new oil and gas well drilling. While environmental goals are important, this ban risks imposing significant financial burdens on taxpayers through higher living costs, reduced public service funding, and wasteful legal expenses. The oil and gas industry supports our local economy in ways that significantly extend beyond

drilling. Your staff report also fails to take into account the economic multiplier effect that for every dollar produced in the oil & gas industry, \$10 additional dollars are generated in local supporting industries.

California's oil supply is already shrinking faster than our demand for fuel. With refineries closing due to costly regulations and actions like this proposed ban, we may have to import expensive fuel from far away, increasing the

carbon footprint and driving up gas prices and everyday expenses like groceries and commuting for working families.

The state is pushing for affordable fuel during the transition to clean energy, but this ban could lead to price hikes and supply shortages, putting more pressure on household budgets. The County's plan also overlooks the tax revenue from oil and gas activities that funds schools, roads, and emergency services. If businesses and jobs are lost without a replacement plan, taxpayers may face higher taxes or cuts to these vital services, threatening our community's quality of life.

This ban also invites serious legal challenges that could waste taxpayer dollars. New state laws allowing local drilling bans are under scrutiny, with industry groups arguing they overstep local authority and conflict with state and federal rules. Courts have previously overturned similar local restrictions, suggesting this ban could lead to expensive lawsuits. Such litigation would divert County funds from essential services like public safety and infrastructure, undermining fiscal responsibility at a time when the state calls for cooperative energy solutions.

It is the position of SBCTAC that following through with this ban is 'environmental elitism' at its worst. Those of you supporting bans like this claim to be champions for minorities. Yet this ban will hit the Hispanic population in SB County the hardest. Over 70% of the workers in the oil & gas industry in SB County are Hispanic. They currently have secure, high paying jobs that give them and their family members greater opportunities for a brighter future. This ban will take those opportunities away from them.

Finally, the SBCTAC opposes political hypocrisy. If your Board follows through with this ban, the SBCTAC strongly believes you should not be hypocrites and you should follow up your vote with a motion for SB County to stop using anything in county government that has an oil or gas component to it effective 1/1/2026. To fail to take that action would underscore your hypocrisy and demagoguery regarding the issue of oil & natural gas.

SBCTAC stands for policies that protect taxpayers and ensure sound governance. The proposed ban fails this test by risking higher costs, reduced revenue, and legal battles without a clear strategy to shield our community.

The SBCTAC respectfully request that the Board reject the ban, work with state officials to support a balanced energy transition, and thoroughly evaluate the fiscal, supply, and legal consequences to prioritize taxpayer interests and community well-being.

Sincerely,  
Mike Stoker  
President & CEO, SBCTAC