

Version # 2

August 26, 2008

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor

As you are well aware, the policy of Santa Barbara County, in the past, has been to limit oil exploration and extraction. Currently, new facts and considerations have caused the County Board of Supervisors to review this policy, and we are forwarding these considerations to you along with our recommendation.

Since the traumatic oil spill in 1969, significant technological improvements on methods of extraction have been made which should appreciably mitigate such spills from happening in the future. Indeed, there have been no significant oil spills in offshore production in the almost forty years since that spill.

Studies have been conducted on the offshore natural seeps that conclude that oil extraction actually mitigates the natural seepage. Extraction reduces the pressure that creates seeps to occur, thereby reducing the amount of oil and gas that is introduced into the water and air.

The international oil market has placed an unfortunate burden on our economy and population. An indication that we are pursuing increased oil extraction would immediately have a depressing effect on the international price of oil, to the benefit of our country. A change in policy and the cooperation of state and local permitting considerations could increase oil supplies in the near future, reducing the economic burden of our dependence on international oil supplies.

Our county will be dealing with a severe financial shortfall next year that could well limit our ability to supply basic county services, and the State is also experiencing similar financial difficulties. An increase in oil extraction would have an important beneficial effect on our state and local budgetary crisis.

Our county is experiencing the initial effects of an increase in unemployment as the various fallouts of the national and local sectors begin to affect our economy. It would seem logical to allow the economic stimulus of employment in the oil industry to benefit our working family population.

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Lastly, our county has long been concerned about the possibility of a national fuel emergency, brought on by an international crisis that would cause our federal government to preempt local and state policy for the needs of our national population and economy. If that were to occur, the County would have less authority in environmental safeguards, oversight and economic benefits. A better policy would be to allow a gradual and intelligent expansion of oil exploration and extraction, rather than to accomplish the same under emergency conditions.

For all the above reasons we are suggesting that the State consider a change in policy that would allow expanded oil exploration and extraction in our county. We further suggest that, in keeping with past practices, such expansion would continue the best environmental, aesthetic and economic policies to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential problems for our community.

We would also suggest that federal, state and local governments collectively work toward the development of a broader energy policy that incorporates review of other viable energy resources, systems and technologies.

The Board of Supervisors