

Katherine Douglas *Public Comment*

From: Katie Davis <kdavis2468@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 3:20 PM
To: sbcob; Das Williams; Laura Capps
Cc: Jonathan Ullman
Subject: October 3 BOS - Deny appeal and support Strauss Wind Project start ASAP

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September 15, 2023

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Via email to: dvillalo@countyofsb.org

Re: Oct 3 – Deny appeal and support the Planning Commission approval of revisions to condition #38 Strauss Wind Energy Project

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

The Sierra Club strongly supports the Strauss Wind Project and the revision recently approved by the Planning Commission, and we urge you to deny the appeal.

Thank you for supporting this project, which will provide enough renewable energy for 45,000 homes, while creating on-going jobs in north county. You first approved the Lompoc Wind Project in 2010, and then the updated Strauss Wind project in early 2020 after hearing support from more than two dozen organizations that favor more local renewable energy. Now that the project is finally complete, we need it to be turned on to supply much needed electricity to our region and the state grid. We are the ones who suffer if we delay this project further.

We are proud of the many native plant and animal conservation elements in the plan, and the Strauss project is abiding by them. For instance, they have installed a state-of-the-art bird detection system IdentiFlight. The revision approved by the Planning Commission fixed an impossible condition that required them to have a Golden Eagle Take Permit in hand, or a letter saying they didn't need one, or a letter saying they would receive one, even though Fish and Wildlife can't provide a letter and permits take many years. This is an unusual condition that never should have been included, and has never been included in any other county project -- nor anywhere else in the state.

The catch-22 problem is that it takes years to get a permit, but Fish and Wildlife can't promise in a letter that a permit will be granted -- even though they always provide a permit to all wind projects that apply. They have never failed to grant a permit ever. That means this condition has been fulfilled, and they will get a permit.

We are glad the Planning Commission approved the amendment to COA 38 to allow the Strauss Wind Project to operate as soon as possible. It is a reasonable request to allow operations upon the Eagle Take Permit application being determined complete (which the company can control), rather than upon permit issuance (which they cannot control and could take many years). This change actually strengthens the requirements, as the prior conservation element wording allowed them to opt out of applying for an ITP entirely.

Don't let this completed project languish. The longer it takes to get projects in operation, the longer we must rely on fossil fuels that are contributing to climate change, which is affecting us here in Santa Barbara County with rising sea levels, longer periods of drought, and deadly wildfires and mudslides. Globally, we face the extinction of a million species, a cost to the United States economy of hundreds of billions of dollars a year, and an increasingly hotter and more inhospitable world.

We must accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels, fulfill our commitment to the County's climate goals, help our local employers, and facilitate corporate compliance with conservation requirements. Please deny this nuisance appeal.

Thank you,

Katie Davis
Chair, Sierra Club Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter
PO Box 31241, Santa Barbara CA 93130-1241

