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Los Padres Chapter

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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PO Box 31241,
Santa Barbara CA
93130-1241
June 4, 2014

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Dear Supervisors:

The Sierra Club has a long history of helping to protect millions of acres of wilderness, and to pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. The Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club has a long-standing commitment to promoting clean energy use and to preventing environmentally damaging fossil fuel extraction. To further this commitment to our beautiful and unique County we fully support the Initiative to prohibit the use of any land within the County's unincorporated area for High-Intensity Petroleum Operations.

Last month the people of Santa Barbara County loudly and clearly declared their opposition to increasing industrial oil recovery from shale here. The Santa Barbara County Water Guardians-led effort to collect enough signatures for a November ballot initiative was considered impossible by most. In just three weeks a groundswell of support and over 300 unpaid volunteers collected more than enough valid signatures. This initiative will ban the use of land within the County's unincorporated area for High-Intensity Petroleum Operations (HIPO). This includes hydraulic fracturing (also known as fracking), acid well stimulation treatments, cyclic steam injection and other types of oil and gas development that use advanced well-stimulation technologies.

There are many reasons this initiative is of vital importance to the people of Santa Barbara – the foremost include:

- 1) **Emissions From High-Intensity Petroleum Operations Will Degrade Our Air Quality and Contribute to Global Climate Change.** The processes and the products of fracking and acidizing petroleum and natural gas contribute to conventional air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Santa Barbara County must accelerate its reduction in GHG and become proactive in becoming a national leader in alternative energy production and research, rather than contributing to the ever-growing consequences of Global Climate Change.

- 2) **Our Limited Water Supplies Should Be Preserved For Agricultural and Municipal Uses.** Water is an extremely precious commodity for our County. Clean, uncontaminated water is needed not only for our citizens but also for our large and prosperous agricultural community. HIPO uses enormous volumes of water. This County does not have the luxury of using our dwindling aquifer for this purpose. Even reclaimed water will be needed for farms and drinking during County droughts.
- 3) **Santa Barbara County Cannot Afford the Risks of Groundwater and Surface Water Pollution.** Although the oil and gas industry refuse to disclose what chemicals they use during drilling/fracking it is well documented that these processes can contaminate underground water tables with a variety of toxic substances, including those dredged up in the backwash. Similarly, produced water from steam injection (CSS) is contaminated with toxins such as boron, lead, arsenic and radioactive compounds. Wastewater is often stored at ground level or injected into waste wells, and taken out of the available water supply for drinking or watering crops because of its high level of contaminants. This wastewater storage is prone to leaks and environmental contamination.
- 4) **Permitting High-Intensity Petroleum Operations Is Not the Way to Grow a Healthy Economy.** The latest estimates of recoverable oil and gas buried in the Monterey Shale has been slashed by 96%! "The Monterey Shale formation is different" say new analyses and the projected "economic boon" to California is vanishing¹. It is not in the County's best long-term interest to promote HIPO. Rather the future points to the economic benefit of research, implementation and utilization of renewable clean energy. Building and promoting the infrastructure in clean renewable energy ensures jobs now and for the future of our children.

This initiative gives priority to the voices of the people of Santa Barbara County. It will protect our valuable land, water and natural beauty into the future from dubious oil and gas extraction methods. We, the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club, fully support this initiative to ensure the protection of our environment thereby ensuring the health and welfare of those fortunate enough to reside in Santa Barbara County.

Respectfully submitted,



David Gold
Chair, Los Padres Chapter, Sierra Club

¹<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-oil-20140521-story.html>