



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name:	Planning & Development
Department No.:	053
Agenda Date:	October 21, 2025, Set Hearing for November 4, 2025
Placement:	Set-Hearing
Estimated Time:	3 HOURS
Continued Item:	Yes
If Yes, date from:	February 25, 2025
Vote Required:	Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director: Lisa Plowman, Director, Planning & Development
Contact: Errin Briggs, Deputy Director, Energy, Minerals & Compliance Division

SUBJECT: Set Hearing to consider the appeals of the Planning Commission approval of the Sable Offshore Corporation's Change of Owner, Operator, and Guarantor for the Santa Ynez Unit, Pacific Offshore Pipeline Company Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System Final Development Plan Permits. Third, Fourth, and First Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

On October 21, 2025, Set Hearing for November 4, 2025 to consider the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) and Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) appeals of the Planning Commission's October 30, 2024 approval of the Change of Ownership, Change of Guarantor, and Change of Operator for the Santa Ynez Unit (SYU), Pacific Offshore Pipeline Company (POPCO) Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System Final Development Plan (FDP) Permits.

On November 4, 2025, the Board could deny the appeals and approve the requested changes by taking the following actions:

- Deny the appeals, Case Nos. 24APL-00025 and 24APL-00026;
- Make the required findings for approval of the Change of Owner, Operator, and Guarantor for the respective Santa Ynez Unit, POPCO Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System FDP Permits, including CEQA findings;
- Determine the requests are not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5); and

- d) Grant *de novo* approval of the Change of Owner, Operator, and Guarantor for the respective SYU, POPCO Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System FDP Permits, subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Alternatively, the Board could provide other direction to staff to prepare findings to reverse or modify the Planning Commission's approval.

Summary Text:

This Board Agenda Letter sets a hearing for November 4, 2025, to reconsider the Planning Commission's approval of the Change of Owner, Change of Operator, and Change of Guarantor for the Santa Ynez Unit (SYU), POPCO Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System Final Development Plan (FDP) Permits.

The Board previously considered this item on February 25, 2025, and with Supervisor Hartmann recused, reached a 2-2 tie vote, which resulted in no action. Sable and Exxon filed suit in federal district court seeking, among other things, a determination that the tie vote required the County to transfer the FDP Permits. On September 12, 2025, the court issued an order directing the Board to hold a *de novo* public hearing to affirm, reverse, or modify the Planning Commission's decision in compliance with Santa Barbara County Code Chapter 25B-8, 9, and 10 within 60 days. If the Board is unable to reach a vote that affirms, reverses, or modifies the Planning Commission's decision, the order directs the Board to hold another *de novo* public hearing within 45 days, and if unable again, every 45 days thereafter.

After the February 25, 2025 hearing, Supervisor Hartmann obtained a letter from the California Fair Political Practices Commission stating that she does not have a conflict of interest on the issue of whether the FDP Permits should be transferred from one owner, operator, and guarantor to another. In reliance on this letter, Supervisor Hartmann intends to review all the February 25, 2025 hearing materials and the recording of the hearing and to participate in the November 4, 2025 hearing and any action taken therein.

Background:

Transfer to a new owner of County permits for facilities which process offshore oil & gas reserves are subject to discretionary review in accordance with County Code Chapter 25B. On March 14, 2024, Sable Offshore Corp. submitted applications to Planning and Development requesting the following:

- A Change of Owner, Operator and Guarantor of the onshore SYU facilities permit, No. 87-DP-32cz (RV06), from ExxonMobil Corporation to Sable Offshore Corporation;
- A Change of Operator and Guarantor of the POPCO Gas Plant permit, No. 93-FDP-015 (AM03), from ExxonMobil Corporation to Sable Offshore Corporation; and
- A Change of Operator and Guarantor of the Las Flores Pipeline System permit, No. 88-DPF-033 (RV01)cz, 88-CP-60 (RV01) (88-DPF-25cz; 85-DP-66cz; 83-DP-25cz), from ExxonMobil Pipeline Company to Sable Offshore Corporation (Operator), and ExxonMobil Corporation to Sable Offshore Corporation (Guarantor).

On October 30, 2024, the Planning Commission approved the requested permit transfers by a vote of 3 to 1 (Parke no; Cooney absent). An appeal of the Planning Commission's action to the Board was subsequently filed by two parties, CBD together with the Wishtoyo Foundation (Case No. 24APL-00025), and EDC together with GOO! and SBCAN (Case No. 24APL-00026).

On February 25, 2025, the Board of Supervisors considered these appeals. At the conclusion of the hearing, Supervisor Lavagnino moved, seconded by Supervisor Nelson, to deny the appeals and

approve the transfers but the motion failed by a vote of 2-2 (Capps and Lee no, Hartmann recused). Supervisor Capps then moved, seconded by Supervisor Lee, to grant the appeals and deny the transfers, however, the motion failed by a vote of 2-2 (Nelson and Lavagnino no, Hartmann recused). As a result, no action was taken by the County Board of Supervisors.

On May 8, 2025, Sable and Exxon Mobil filed litigation in federal district court seeking resolution of the Board's 2-2 vote. On September 12, 2025, the court issued an order remanding the matter back to the Board for reconsideration.

The Board's set hearing package dated February 4, 2025, including the Planning Commission staff report, appeal letters, action letter, and public comments is included as Attachment A. The full Board Hearing Package dated February 25, 2025, including the Findings, Conditions of Approval, and CEQA Notice of Exemption is included as Attachment B. The minute order for the February 25, 2025, hearing is included as Attachment C.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

The costs to process these appeals are wholly borne by Sable through payment of processing fees for staff time. Funding for these requests is budgeted in the Planning and Development's Permitting Budget Program on Page 307 of the County of Santa Barbara Fiscal Year 2025-26 Adopted Budget.

Special Instructions:

The Planning and Development Department Hearing Support shall publish a legal notice in the Santa Barbara News-Press or equivalent at least 10 days prior to the hearing on November 4, 2025. Planning and Development Department Hearing Support shall also fulfill mailed noticing requirements. The Clerk of the Board shall forward the minute order of the hearing as well as a copy of the notice and proof of publication to the Planning and Development Department, Hearing Support, Attention: David Villalobos.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Board of Supervisors Set Hearing Package dated February 4, 2025

Attachment B – Board of Supervisors Full Hearing Package dated February 25, 2025

Attachment C – Board of Supervisors Minute order for February 25, 2025

Contact Information:

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