

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - LPFW

3



From: Carla Mena <carla@forestwatch.org>
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2025 4:46 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment | Departmental Agenda Item 3) 25-00921 Phaseout Oil and Gas Operations
Attachments: SB_BOS_OIL_PHASE_OUT_LPFW_LOS.pdf

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings,

We request this letter to be submitted as a written comment for the Oct 21st SB BOS meeting regarding support for Departmental Agenda Item 3) 25-00921 Phaseout Oil and Gas Operations.

Sincerely,
Carla



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sam Thomas
President, Ventura

Macy McGinness
Vice Pres., Santa Barbara

Patricia Krout
Treasurer, Goleta

Chris Collier
Secretary, Camarillo

Matthew Campa
Santa Barbara

Anna deLaski
Los Olivos

Terri Laine
Oak View

Vic Thasiah
Ventura

Nate Wallace
Ojai

STAFF

Jeff Kuyper, J.D.
Executive Director

Bryant Baker, M.S.
Director of Conservation &
Research

Graciela Cabello
Director of Youth &
Community Engagement

Jessica Dias
Director of Development

Krista Eulberg
Development Associate

Carla Mena, M.P.A.
Director of Policy &
Legislative Affairs

Ben Pitterle, M.E.S.M.
Director of Advocacy &
Field Operations

October 21, 2025

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street,
Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2000
Sent via email to sbcob@countyofsb.org

RE: Agenda Item 3) 25-00921 | Support for Ordinance to Phase Out Oil & Gas
in Santa Barbara County

Dear Chair Capps and Members of the Board,

Los Padres ForestWatch hereby submits this comment letter in support of the Santa Barbara County staff report's recommendation of an ordinance to 1) prohibit new oil and gas wells, and 2) phase out existing oil and gas facilities/operations. We respectfully request that our letter be formally incorporated into the record and considered.

For nearly two decades, Los Padres ForestWatch has been dedicated to halting any further expansion of oil and gas drilling in our national forest and surrounding communities. Oil production harms endangered and sensitive species, pollutes our air and water, and worsens the climate crisis in one of the world's most biodiverse regions.

For decades, oil production in our county has put residents at risk from air pollution, contaminated drinking water, and climate-fueled disasters. Today, more than 40% of wells are located near homes, schools, and hospitals. Research shows that continued oil production contributes to asthma, heart disease, and cancer, while exposing us all to unnecessary risk of spills, fires, and drilling accidents.

The benefits of transitioning away from fossil fuels are clear. [Research](#) estimates that reducing operations could prevent \$54 to \$81 million in premature death costs by 2045. With oil generating less than 0.2% of county

revenue, the economic impact of phasing out is minimal. In fact, clean energy development and well remediation work will create new, safe jobs for local workers and help build a more resilient economy.

Under [AB 3233](#), local cities and counties are granted the authority to pass ordinances, regulate, limit, or prohibit proposed and existing oil and gas operations within their jurisdiction. We encourage Santa Barbara County to exercise its authority and adopt a strong, equitable ordinance to phase out oil and gas operations.

The oil industry and its allies are already pushing to reverse decades of progress and return us to the “drill, baby drill” agenda that ignores science, public health and the climate crisis. The Trump Administration recently announced plans to open [400,000 acres of federal lands](#) to new oil leases along the central coast, including Santa Barbara County. On June 23, the Bureau of Land Management announced it would be conducting an environmental review of facilities resuming its oil and gas leasing program in California. The County of Santa Barbara has a unique opportunity to chart a different path and demonstrate true climate leadership.

To ensure that the ordinance is effective and equitable, we recommend that the county include the following:

- 1. Prohibit New Extraction or Production Facilities:** No new permits for oil and gas drilling, redrilling, deepening of wells, or accessory production facilities shall be issued.
- 2. Nonconforming Use Designation:** Existing oil and gas operations shall be classified as ‘nonconforming uses’ and will be subject to an amortization period before mandatory cessation and removal.
- 3. Strengthen Infrastructure Language:** Ensure strong, enforceable provisions to prevent new or expanded oil and gas activity on surrounding public lands.
- 4. Just Transition Support Policies:** Commission a workforce development study and subsequent programming to assist oil and gas industry workers in transition to other employment sectors, with particular support for transition to clean energy jobs.

California is leading the nation in moving beyond fossil fuels. Governor Newsom's [Executive Order N-79-20](#) commits the state to achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2045, and sets clear targets to phase out fossil fuel dependence. Local action is essential

to meeting these goals. By acting now, Santa Barbara County can serve as a model for climate leadership and protect the public health of communities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Board of Supervisors to draft an oil and gas phase-out ordinance and make this a top priority for Santa Barbara County. We further urge the County to complete this ordinance and amortization study in a timely manner. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to a healthier, more sustainable future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla Mena". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carla" and the last name "Mena" clearly distinguishable.

Carla Mena, M.P.P
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Los Padres ForestWatch