

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Heal the Ocean

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From: Noah Boland <noah@healtheocean.org>
Sent: Friday, October 31, 2025 2:43 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Karina Johnston
Subject: Heal the Ocean Public Comment Re: Departmental Item #3, November 4, 2025
Attachments: HTO Public Comment_ Departmental Agenda Item #3.docx.pdf

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Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please distribute to the Board the attached public comment on Departmental Item #3 of the November 4, 2025 hearing, regarding the appeals of Sable Offshore Corporation's Change of Owner, Operator, and Guarantor for the Santa Ynez Unit (SYU), Pacific Offshore Pipeline Company (POPCO) Gas Plant, and Las Flores Pipeline System Final Development Plan (FDP) Permits.

Kind regards,

Noah Boland

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October 31, 2025

Ms. Laura Capps, Chair
County Board of Supervisors
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Via email: sbcob@countyofsb.org

Re: 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 (File No. 25-00942)

Dear Chair Capps and Honorable Board of Supervisors,

Heal the Ocean strongly opposes the staff recommendation that the County Board of Supervisors deny the Appeals challenging the Planning Commission's 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. We urge the Board to instead *uphold the Appeals and deny the transfer of permits* from ExxonMobil Corporation to Sable Offshore Corporation.

The purpose of the County's Ordinance, Chapter 25B, is to protect public health and safety, and safeguard the natural resources and environment of the county of Santa Barbara, by ensuring that safe operation, adequate financial responsibility, and compliance with all applicable county laws and permits are maintained during and after all changes of owner, operator or guarantor of certain oil and gas facilities. Sable has not shown that it has the financial capacity to clean up an oil spill or abandon the facilities, which has the potential to put a future financial burden on the public. Sable has a record of persistent legal noncompliance, demonstrating that they are either unable or unwilling to follow the law. Their continuous disregard for the law includes ignoring multiple cease-and-desist orders from the California Coastal Commission and digging up sensitive habitats without permits.

Several recent examples support this evaluation, including:

- The California Coastal Commission fined Sable a **record \$18 million penalty** for Coastal Act violations and unpermitted development;

- The Regional Water Quality Control Board sent Sable **multiple notices of violation** for unauthorized discharge of waste into waters of the US;
- The state **Attorney General filed a lawsuit** accusing Sable of illegally discharging waste into streams and habitats;
- The District Attorney filed **21 criminal charges** against the company, including five felonies;
- The State Lands Commission Chair publicly questioned “Sable’s willingness to be a transparent operator” due to its “**willful disregard for the directives of regulatory agencies**”;
- The State Fire Marshal sent Sable a **notice regarding noncompliance** with the State Waiver requirements for the pipelines; and
- Sable’s own **investors filed a federal lawsuit** accusing the company of misleading investors about restarting production to boost its stock price before a public offering.

As the County has recently affirmed its opposition to new offshore oil leasing in Resolution No. 25-140 (June 10, 2025), and as the County has recently directed staff to put together ordinances that would stop new exploration for fossil fuel extraction in the county and phase out existing oil facilities, this hearing is a further opportunity to for our County to prioritize our public health, safety, natural resources, and environment over economic interests in fossil fuel extraction. Oil operations in our County have littered our coastline with improperly abandoned infrastructure, contributed to climate change, and have polluted our waters with massive, historic oil spills. As Sable has shown that they will likely not demonstrate safe operations, adequate financial responsibility, and compliance with all applicable county laws, we urge the Board to vote to *uphold the Appeals and deny the transfer of permits from ExxonMobil to Sable.*

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment.



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