

July 23, 2019

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800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Support the Granting of a Modified Conditional Use Permit for
Renaissance Petroleum (Case Number PL 14-0103)

Honorable Chair Bennett and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Ventura County CoLAB is an organization representing over 500 members countywide. Our mission is to preserve and promote a healthy economic base in Ventura County, while protecting the local quality of life for Ventura County citizens.

Alternative energies and electrically powered vehicles are a certain part of the future. However, the reality of today is that petroleum use in the state of California has increased steadily each year – from 942,000 barrels per day in 2012 to 1,012,000 barrels per day in 2018. While fuel consumption increases, statistics from the State Division of Oil and Gas show that California's crude oil production continues to decline, a 22% reduction since 2007.

According to the California Air Resources Board, California's foreign oil imports have tripled in the past 20 years. In 2018, California imported 58.6% of the oil it consumed from outside from foreign sources, such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Angola, Kuwait, Ecuador, and Colombia. As there are no crude oil import pipelines into California, imported oil from other states and countries must travel to California by tanker vessels into ports in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas to meet the growing demand. The average time for an oil supertanker to deliver crude oil products across the ocean from Middle Eastern countries is 40 days. Oil tankers have been estimated to be responsible for more than 13% of the total CO2 emissions from all overseas cargo activity, and this is increasing, due to rising demand (International Council on Clean Transportation, 2017).

From the perspective of global climate change, it is critical that Ventura County support the production of local oil to keep up with supply demands and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Environmental advocacy should be focused on ways to reduce the demand for gasoline rather than appealing local production projects. Every single barrel of oil not produced in Ventura County results in more tanker traffic across our oceans, and an increase in global greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the issue above, CoLAB is very concerned about the number of groundless appeals that have been filed against relatively minor oil and gas projects and the impacts of these needless appeals on County staff and budgets. The projects that have been appealed represent the maturity of the oil industry in Ventura County, requiring necessary upgrades to facilities for safety and production. As the Board is aware, the majority of the appeals filed thus far have not been found to have merit. The most recent evidence of this is the July 10, 2019, Court of Appeals denial of a petition for review of an appeal (brought forth by the same appellants as today's hearing) about a similar oil and gas project in Ventura County.

The County has established and follows a rigorous permitting approval process for oil and gas project permitting that includes not only an assessment of the proposed project, but also the project applicant's overall compliance for their existing operations. The Staff Report dated July 23, 2019, and all exhibits attached, speak to the thoroughness of the County's permitting process, and provide facts and information to refute assertions made by the appellant.

CoLAB believes that the energy future in California depends on the well managed production of local oil reserves within the state, including Ventura County. We commend the Ventura County Planning Division for their thorough analysis of the environmental impacts of the Renaissance Petroleum project and we urge the Board to approve the Modified Conditional Use Permit, as recommended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lynn Gray Jensen", written in a cursive style.

Lynn Gray Jensen
Executive Director

CC: Kim Prillhart, Director RMA
Dave Ward, Planning Director