

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 9, 2019 2:09 PM  
**To:** Bennett, Steve  
**Subject:** I SUPPORT Agenda Item 46, your motion for a temporary ban on oil and gas well approvals

To Supervisor Bennett,

In SUPPORT of Agenda Item 46, your motion for a temporary ban on new oil and gas wells or re-drilling of existing wells that use steam injection near potable water sources in Ventura County.

As a biologist, parent, 25-year resident of Ventura County, and consistent voter who has not missed a single election in 40 years, I am writing in support of Agenda item #46, your proposed Interim Ordinance to temporarily prohibit our county's approval of new oil and gas wells, and re-drilling of existing oil and gas wells, for oil production that will utilize steam injection in the vicinity of potable groundwater aquifers while the County Planning Division studies both potential regulations for this land use, and potential amendments to the County's zoning ordinances to require discretionary approval of new development under antiquated oil and gas permits, for all supervisorial districts.

It is my understanding that the U.S. Geologic Service has detected thermogenic gases in three (3) water wells in the Fox Canyon Aquifer in concentrations just slightly below the flammable/explosive level. I also understand that there is a proposal to drill seventy-nine (79) new tar sands wells near the Camarillo Airport *without* an Environmental Impact Study, which is a short-sighted, irresponsible move from a public and environmental health standpoint. Supervisor Bennett's motion would rightly stop this oil drilling expansion project until an Environmental Review can be completed to assess both the source of the water contamination and the impacts of this high-pressure, high-temperature oil drilling process on the integrity of our aquifers and their ability to provide safe, clean water to our communities. Additionally, your motion would also develop methods for our county to apply essential new conditions on old oil and gas drilling permits. I support your motion in full.

Firstly, protections for safe, clean water are non-negotiable for life and must be prioritized over oil and gas industry profits or convenience. Safe, clean drinking water is the most basic of human necessities and, as such, must be treated as a human right. People should not have to worry about whether their water is safe and healthy to drink, cook with, or bathe in. And while ample winter rains this season were a welcome change from five (5) years of severe drought, aquifers statewide remain unreplenished and abnormally low, while we can only guess how much precipitation might or might not fall in years to come. Ventura County simply can NOT afford to unnecessarily risk contaminating ANY potential sources of clean, potable water but must safeguard every precious drop!

Secondly, as a taxpayer who lives in a community uncomfortably close to those devastated by the Christmas 2017 Thomas Fire, I will never forget how the Santa Ana Winds, which normally last only 2-3 days maximum, blew for an unheard of 13 days last year ... fanning the 3rd largest wildfire in California history. Hundreds of millions of dollars were lost as multiple fires burned through the December holidays & into January, ravaging not just the so-called "wildland-urban interface" but annihilating whole neighborhoods and towns. Every night before I dared fall asleep, I checked the progress of the fires online to reassure myself that my family was not in immediate danger. And I worried constantly how my daughter, who suffers from asthma, would be able to breathe the contaminated air (which had everyone I knew congested, coughing & complaining of headaches) without life-threatening consequences.

Less than a year later, the Woolsey Fire forced my family and 250,000 other Ventura County residents to evacuate our homes, many of us in the middle of the night, and the deadly Camp Fire incinerated the entire town of Paradise, burning residents alive as they attempted to flee.

As the 2017/18 California fires make clear, NONE of our communities are secure from flaming embers in hurricane-force winds, where even the dehydrated root systems of our landscape act as a subterranean conduit for raging wildfire. Our collective security smolders along with our state's now year-round fire season, especially as higher temperatures, lower humidity, more drought-parched fuel, and ever scarcer water make them increasingly difficult to defend. The threat of these and other unnatural disasters is only growing stronger because of anthropogenic, greenhouse gas-induced Climate Breakdown. We can't wait any longer for bold, impactful climate solutions and so can't delay any longer in transitioning quickly and completely to 100% renewable energy. We also can't risk water sources contaminated with heat-generating gases that may easily ignite, sparking yet another source of wildfire in our already traumatized communities.

The IPCC has warned that we have ALREADY nearly OVERSPENT the entire world's carbon budget, & we face IRREVERSIBLE degradation of planetary systems that make Earth life-sustaining ... unless we systemically change our global energy system within 12 SHORT years.

And Ventura County is ALREADY counting the concealed costs of fossil fuel use in untold human suffering and lives lost ... and the threat to property and life from Climate Chaos is growing day by day. Scientists consider increasingly ferocious wildfires to be one of the most starkly apparent consequences of Climate Change, and once large areas burn, they release carbon that feeds more warming; just as melting ice forms larger expanses of dark lakes and ocean waters that are less reflective of the sun's energy and so absorb more heat. (The Antarctic has lost 3 trillion tons of ice since 1992 ... 40% of that in just the last 5 years.) The IPCC predicts the United States could collectively lose 1.2% of GDP for every 1.8F degrees of Global Warming. By contrast, most Global Warming solutions come with big benefits for public health, jobs, consumers, our environment and wildlife.

We cannot wait another day in the fight against Climate Destabilization if we are to stave off the worst it has in store. It is exacting planetary consequences of biblical proportions even now ... terrorizing friends, family, neighbors, businesses and workers right here, right now.

Lastly, this Board has been elected to ensure the health, safety and prosperity of Ventura County residents. To discharge that duty responsibly, environmental impact reviews and opportunities for public comment on local oil and gas drilling decisions in an era of an unprecedented Climate Emergency should be the least we can expect.

Thank you for your motion; I will attend today's meeting to support its passage.

Sincerely,  
Rose Ann Witt

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