



**CFROG**

**Your Oil & Gas Watchdog**

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## **Protect Our Water**

### **Fact Sheet on the Interim Urgency Ordinance to Temporarily Prohibit County Approval of New Wells, and Re-Drilling of Existing Wells, for Oil Production that Will Utilize Steam Injection in the Vicinity of Potable Groundwater Aquifers**

Ventura County Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting  
Ordinance Proposed by Supervisor Steve Bennett  
April 23, 2019 at 1 p.m.

#### **Why is this temporary ban needed?**

A recent U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) report found petroleum-related gases in two Oxnard groundwater wells sited directly over cyclic steam oil recovery operations, and possibly a third. An operator is proposing 79 new tar sands wells near multiple water wells between Oxnard and Camarillo. Currently, the oil operator's application to the county under an antiquated permit doesn't even require a review of the potential hazards to our health.

#### **What are the oil operators doing under the Fox Canyon aquifer, a vital source of water to agriculture and residents?**

Operators have been in this area since 1937 and have produced about 10 million barrels of oil. They are now working to wring oil out of tar sands at the 1,800-2,300 foot level. The lower aquifer system goes down to a level of about 1,700 feet.

#### **What is cyclic steam injection?**

Steam injection is an extreme method of extraction and has been known to damage underground well infrastructure and open fissures in the ground. Wells are drilled down into the tar sands and then 1,000 to 3,000 feet over. Steel casings are fed into the well and steam is injected into the tar sands, heating the layer until the heavy oil can be extracted.

#### **What has been found in our Oxnard water wells?**

Scientists have detected methane in levels just under the explosive range, propane, ethane, isobutane and n-pentane. USGS scientists are not yet certain where these gases migrated from and have recommended more testing, but the working theory is they originated from the cyclic steam activity that lies directly underneath. More results are due this spring.

#### **Will the moratorium stop all oil drilling activity?**

No. It only applies to the approval of new wells, or the re-drilling of old wells, using steam injection near aquifers with potable water. It is in effect for 45 days, unless extended. It will not affect current operations.



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**What else is CFROG advocating for?**

We believe that the permits originally issued for this oilfield in 1955, which predate the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, should be moved to a discretionary status in order to allow more oversight and assessment of the environmental impacts of new oil drilling techniques.

**What can I do to help?**

Please contact your supervisor's office and tell them you support this interim urgency ordinance. The vote is this Tuesday, April 23

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