



for public health, our watersheds, air sheds and oceans – it is all connected

November 14, 2017 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kimberly Rivers, CFROG Executive Director
Cell: 805-727-1393
ED@CFROG.org
www.CFROG.org

CFROG WINS!

Superior Court finds county violated state environmental laws

Ventura County, CA –

Citizens for Responsible Oil and Gas (CFROG) has won on all issues raised in legal action stemming from Ventura County’s processing and approval of an oil and gas project, which the court has confirmed violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CFROG filed legal action to protect air quality, public health and safety, and enforce CEQA when it became clear the county put the interests of the oil company ahead of its duty to protect the public and abide by state law.

The Nov. 14 court order, issued by Hon. Glen M. Reiser of Ventura County Superior Court, directs the county to nullify its June 23, 2016, approval of the project and prepare a revised Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) “consistent with CEQA requirements.” The order lays bare how procedures in the Ventura County Planning Department for calculating air emissions from oil and gas projects disregard thresholds set in the county’s General Plan and, specifically, the Ojai Valley Area Plan.

“This is a win for the people of Ventura County,” said Kimberly Rivers, CFROG executive director. “The county must start putting public health and CEQA compliance ahead of profit for the fossil-fuel industry.” CFROG’s petition to the court, filed on July 21, 2016, asked for a cumulative environmental study that properly considers: 1) air emissions and the CEQA significance thresholds set by the Ojai Valley Area Plan, 2) cumulative impacts of the full number of nearby oil and gas projects and 3) public-safety impacts from allowing oil tanker trucks on Koenigstein Road.

The court order demands the county comply with CFROG’s request and states, “The SEIR must be revised to analyze significant air quality and traffic safety impacts, including appropriate project mitigation and alternatives.” The court went on to state,

“The court is empathetic to the Board majority’s stated motivation in its CEQA deliberation that “[its] job is to try to drive economics, give jobs.” The Board’s obligation under CEQA, however, is to fully inform the public as to the environmental impacts of proposed projects and where significant public health and safety issues are implicated to properly consider project mitigation and alternatives.”

The Court found the county is wrong in its assertion that air emissions from oil wells need not be counted toward the project’s air emissions because oil and gas wells are permitted by the Air Pollution Control District. The court order states, “The county’s claimed exemption of all oil and gas project emissions from CEQA air quality impact analysis contravenes state law.” The court continued: “The proposed project should have been deemed a significant impact in terms of air quality with concomitant CEQA-mandated discussion of mitigation and project alternatives.”

The project site is located in the Upper Ojai Valley and the project was first submitted by Mirada Petroleum, but was transferred to Carbon California in February of this year.

CFROG is represented in this action by Michelle Black and Amy Minter of Chatten, Brown & Carstens based in Hermosa Beach, CA.

CFROG is a 501c3 organization