



Press Release

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Coalition to Protect San Luis Obispo County Water Basin Raises New Concerns about the Impact of Development of the Arroyo Grande Oil Field (AGOF)

The Item is before the Board of Supervisors for Consideration and Vote.

San Luis Obispo, CA— March 8, 2018....San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors have been requested by the County Water Agency consultants to approve the exploration of a **basin boundary modification** for the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin; and to approve preparation and submittal to the California Department of Water Resources of an initial notification of intent to declare the Pismo Creek fringe area either a sub-basin or non-basin.

The Coalition to Protect San Luis Obispo County has serious reservations about the recommendations that the County Water Agency Consultants have presented to the County Supervisors because the consultant's report (hyper) basically ignores the potential of significant negative impacts on water quantity and quality from the Arroyo Grande Oil Field (AGOF), which is located in that small portion of the Santa Maria basin. "The Arroyo Grande Oil Field continues to operate a toxic waste underground disposal site without a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency and in violation of Federal law, disposing of it in an identified drinking water aquifer," said Charles Varni, co-chair of the Coalition to Protect San Luis Obispo County. "The County Supervisors have allowed this for many years with a Conditional Use Permit."

The County Water Agency will be accepting public comment on the draft recommendations through March 21 and there will eventually be public hearings by the Supervisors.

The boundary modification is a threat to the Santa Maria basin from the Pismo Creek fringe area.

The Coalition's concern is the impact on groundwater by oil extraction practices in the Arroyo Grande Oil Field (AGOF). For every barrel of oil produced, 22 barrels of water is pumped from the ground. At current extraction rates of 1000 barrels per day (bpd) that equals 924,000 gallons of water. Sentinel Peak Resources has plans to expand production by an additional 481 wells which will produce 10,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil, and use 220,000 barrels per day (bpd) of water or 9,240,000 gallons per day. This sort of impact on potable groundwater resources in a very small area is unheard of in our County, with possible large

cones of depression which could draw water from the Santa Maria basin. The aquifer being drawn upon is designated as one with potential beneficial use by the Federal Safe Water Drinking Act.

Risks to toxic Groundwater Pollution

Also, there are serious risks of toxic groundwater pollution of the Santa Maria basin. Currently about 15% of oil production and wastewater, with concentrated petroleum and added chemical enhancements, are injected into deep aquifers adjacent to the Santa Maria basin. At full production this would equal 1,386,000 gallons per day of re-injected chemical and water waste. The potential impacts of this on Santa Maria basin water quality, which underlies the Five Cities, is unknown nor is there apparently much detailed understanding of the underlying hydrology of the deeper interfaces of geological strata, their permeability, or the subsurface migration of groundwater. Also, there is no mention of the impact of pressurized injection of petroleum wastewater into the deep aquifer in the document.

About Coalition to Protect San Luis Obispo County

Protecting region's water supplies, air quality and diverse local economy are priorities for campaign leaders, who represent local business, agriculture and conservation communities.

The Coalition is sponsoring an initiative (hyper) to amend the county's General Plan, Local Coastal Program and County Code to prohibit using land in the county's unincorporated areas for oil well stimulation treatments like fracking and acidizing. It would also prohibit new oil and gas well drilling land uses on unincorporated county lands. Under the initiative, existing oil and gas land uses would be allowed to continue, but not expand. The initiative also protects vested rights and allows the county to grant limited exceptions to avoid taking private property.

Call to Action

Learn more and read the initiative at <http://protectslocounty.org> and [click here](#) for current locations to sign the initiative.

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