



November 18, 2019

Santa Barbara County Planning Commission
 Planning and Development, Hearing Support
 123 East Anapamu Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101
 Attn: David Villalobos, Board Assistant Supervisor
dvillalo@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

RE: Strauss Wind Project - SUPPORT

Dear Santa Barbara County Planning Commissioners,

We the undersigned support the Strauss Wind project and urge you to approve the project.

This project is a great opportunity to increase local renewable energy generation. Our Climate Action Plan calls for the County to, “promote the use of clean alternative energy production by encouraging development of utility scale renewable electrical generation facilities.” However, our County currently ranks near the bottom of the state’s 58 counties in terms of renewable energy, and the county is not on track to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals. By approving this project, an updated version of the Lompoc Wind Energy Project approved ten years ago on the exact same site, we have a chance to get back on track in building our clean energy future.

The Strauss Wind Energy Project would generate enough clean, renewable energy to power nearly 45,000 homes each year with less than half of the turbines previously approved by the County under the Lompoc Project. During the approximately 30-year life of the Strauss Project, it would prevent more than 6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from polluting the environment — the equivalent of eliminating nearly 16 billion vehicle miles or the burning of almost 15 million gallons of oil. It would also provide hundreds of jobs and infuse tens of millions of tax dollars into our County.

Climate action is urgent. Last year the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report written by 91 scientists from 40 countries based on more than 6,000 scientific studies that says we need to transition off of fossil fuels as soon as possible or face a global climate crisis by 2040.¹ Here in California we face rising seas, raging fires, droughts and challenges to our agricultural sector. The Thomas Fire alone destroyed 1,063 structures and caused over \$2.2 billion in damages. The ensuing debris flows in Montecito resulted in 21 fatalities and destroyed hundreds of homes. According to the IPCC report, failure to rein in emissions, “poses large risks for natural and human systems...some risks may be long-lasting and irreversible, such as the loss of some ecosystems.”² A subsequent report this year finds that, “as many as one million plant and animal species are now at risk of extinction, posing a dire threat to ecosystems that people all over the world depend on for their survival.”³

The Strauss Project would help the state come closer to meeting its 100% clean energy goal. This is particularly important in Santa Barbara County where we are on the end of both PG&E’s grid in the north and SCE’s grid in the south. Having power generation in our region will make our grid more resilient and reliable, reducing our reliance on far flung energy sources transmitted long distances along vulnerable wires. The Strauss Wind Energy Project would more than double Santa Barbara County’s current renewable production and would demonstrate a strong commitment by the County to assist the State in meeting its renewable energy goals in an efficient, sustainable and environmentally sound way.

We support mitigating impacts to the maximum extent possible as specified in the EIR. We also recognize that if our goal is to protect animal species, ecosystems and our society, we need to rapidly transition to renewable sources of energy. Our best and most immediate opportunity to do so in Santa Barbara County is to approve the Strauss Wind Project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Davis, Chair
Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter

Sigrid Wright, CEO/Executive Director
Community Environmental Council

¹ Major Climate Report Describes a Strong Risk of Crisis as Early as 2040 , New York Times, Oct. 7, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/climate/ipcc-climate-report-2040.html>

² Impacts of 1.5 °C global warming on natural and human systems, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, October 2018 (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>)

³ Humans Are Speeding Extinction and Altering the Natural World at an ‘Unprecedented’ Pace, New York Times, May 6, 2019, (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/06/climate/biodiversity-extinction-united-nations.html>)

Rebeca August, Chair
Safe Energy Now! North County

Maricela Morales, Executive Director
Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Craig Lewis, Executive Director
Clean Coalition

Rinaldo Brutoco, President
World Business Academy

Dick Flacks & Janet Blevins, Co-Chairs
Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN)

Vijaya Jammalamadaka, President
League of Women Voters, Santa Barbara

Lisa Thornhill, President
League of Women Voters, Santa Maria Valley

Luke J. Swetland, President & CEO
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Eder Gaona- Macedo, MPA, Executive Director
Future Leaders of America, Inc

Brigitta Van Der Raay, Chair
Climate Reality, Santa Barbara Chapter

Grace Feldmann & Emiliano Campobello, Co-Chairs
SB Standing Rock Coalition

Catherine Gautier, PhD, Climate Scientist, Professor Emerita, UCSB
Member, Fearless Grandmother Society Santa Barbara

Jennifer Manning, Chapter Chair
UCSB CALPIRG

Gordon Hensley, Executive Director
San Luis Obispo Coastkeeper
Environment in the Public Interest

Tara Rizzi, Hon. AIASB, Executive Director
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Grant Marcus, Dir. NSR
Nurses for Social Responsibility

Rev. Tamara Casanova Suzuki, Minister
Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Goleta

Michal Lynch, Lead
Women's March Santa Barbara

Robert Perry, Founding Member
The Climate Mobilization Santa Barbara County

David Krieger, President
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MERITO: Multicultural Education for Resources Issues Threatening Oceans

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Nancy Black, President
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