

RE: Clean Coalition Comments on ExxonMobil Interim Trucking for SYU Phased Restart Project

To the Santa Barbara Board of County Supervisors,

We urge you deny the ExxonMobil plan to reopen retired oil wells and drastically increase the amount of fossil fuels transported across county lines. This project would be a step in the wrong direction from achieving the County's ambitious climate goals. From every conceivable angle, the ExxonMobil project will exacerbate, not mitigate, climate change. Resuming pumping at retired sites greatly increases the chance of an oil spill. Trucks usually use polluting diesel fuel and will increase traffic throughout the county, adding to the collective county footprint, as cars sit idle on the freeway waiting for the freeway to clear up, emitting carbon dioxide all the while. This proposal does not seek to enrich the community or improve sustainability; instead, any proposed benefits would come at the expense of the county and the people that live here.

We should not be expanding fossil fuel generation

On December 10, 2019, the County Board of Supervisors recognized a climate emergency, passing a resolution by Supervisor Williams. The very same year, the County Board of Supervisors passed a Strategic Energy Plan. There is enough precedent and wisdom on the board to realize the danger of expanding fossil fuel generation, particularly given bad track record oil companies have when it comes to safety and regard for the environment. Take for example, the Huntington Beach Oil Spill, which released some 126,000 gallons of crude oil into the ocean last year. Every day that oil is pumped from our coast, there is a legitimate threat of an oil spill. There simply is not a fool-proof way to drill for oil, albeit it would not be the cost-effective solution even if there were. Instead, the County should be focused on investing in renewables-driven energy, which has a high upside, given the trifecta of environmental, economic, and resilience benefits. In the South County, there is a significant opportunity because of the unreliable territory in the Goleta Load Pocket.

Investing in the Goleta Load Pocket



Map of the Goleta Load Pocket (GLP)

The Goleta Load Pocket (GLP) is a 70-mile stretch of California coastline from Point Conception to Lake Casitas, with only two transmission lines, both of which run on the exact same transmission towers through tens of miles of mountainous terrain that is rated at the highest fire risk level - resulting in the GLP being extremely vulnerable to transmission outages, including during Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). The GLP's single point of interconnection to the transmission system exists at the Goleta Substation, and as indicated, if one of the transmission lines goes out, the second and only other transmission line will go out too; and the GLP will completely lose the source of vast majority of the energy that serves it. While there are several distribution lines routed along the coast through Carpinteria that can be energized in the case of a transmission outage, they would not provide enough electricity to power the entire area.

As outlined by the Clean Coalition's Goleta Load Pocket Community Microgrid Initiative¹, 200 MW of solar and 400 MWh of energy storage need to be interconnected with the GLP in order to provide the GLP 100% resilience against a complete transmission outage. This can be achieved through the construction of solar on built environments (rooftops, parking lots, and parking structures). Although 200 MW of solar sounds daunting, it represents just five times the amount of solar that is currently installed in the region, and the Clean Coalition has assessed that 200 MW of additional solar will require 7% of the commercial-scale solar siting potential on GLP rooftops, parking lots, and parking structures - assuming all 200 MW of solar is sited on built environments, which is being very conservative, since some solar will definitely be

¹ <https://clean-coalition.org/community-microgrids/goleta-load-pocket/>

deployed on residential rooftops, and some will potentially be deployed on open ground as well. Much of the needed investment, particularly in energy storage, has already been made, bringing the GLP one step closer to achieving a Community Microgrid. The County should focus on deploying a Community Microgrid, unleashing the trifecta of economic, environmental, and resilience benefits that it creates for the benefit of the community, rather than further fossil fuel investments.

Clean Emissions Vehicles

The ExxonMobil proposal calls for at least 70 trucks passing to and from the processing facility each day, which adds significant emissions in addition to the oil that is being transported since most medium and heavy-duty trucks run on diesel fuel. In the event that the County is seriously considering approving the plan, there should be a mandate that ExxonMobil only use no emissions vehicles (either electric or hydrogen trucks).

Conclusion

Clean Coalition appreciates the opportunity to comment and urges the Board to reject this proposal outright. The County has made the right decision when it comes to climate and energy issues in the past; we hope that that track record will continue with a much-needed win for clean energy.

/s/ BEN SCHWARTZ

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