

Communication from Public

Name: Nicolas Gardner

Date Submitted: 03/24/2025 09:22 PM

Council File No: 21-1395-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee, The story of Los Angeles and the environmental conditions we live in cannot be separated from our history as an oil-rich region. In the early twentieth century, Los Angeles became one of the world's largest oil producers, generating nearly a quarter of the world's oil supply. Today, there are more than 5,000 active, idle, and orphan wells in the City of Los Angeles. They are next to schools, community centers, and homes. Nearly 75% of active wells in the City are located near 'sensitive land use' facilities. The fact is that 3.3 million residents of Los Angeles County live near an uncapped oil well, and over 500,000 residents live within 1300 ft of a well. There are 68 named oil fields in the Los Angeles basin alone, representing thousands of wells and billions of gallons of oil. Living near an oil well or on an oil field causes great harm to personal and collective health. Exposure to toxic chemicals found in oil wells, such as benzene and methane, is directly linked to an increase in dizziness, headaches, respiratory system irritation, skin conditions, respiratory diseases, chronic illness, cardiac events, strokes, preterm births, and cancer. From the San Fernando Valley to the Harbor, uncapped oil wells are a silent public health and environmental crisis that has and will continue to harm, incapacitate, and kill millions of Angelenos. The harm is borne disproportionately by working-class communities of color. The front-line communities living near two of the largest oil fields in the city, the Wilmington and LA City Oil Fields, are majority Black and Latine and majority working poor. The vast majority of communities surrounding the Inglewood Oil Field, the largest urban oil field in the country, are Black and Latine. A community-based study conducted by Occidental College, the University of Colorado, and STAND-LA surveyed communities living near active drill sites on the La Cienega Oil Field; the households included reported being 90% non-white, and 75% renters with an average income of just over \$22,000. This study found higher asthma rates, respiratory irritations, and conditions in University Park and West Adams residents living near the drill sites. There are similar experiences and stories across the City, we cannot continue to allow such blatant examples of environmental racism and injustice. No council district is immune from the harm

of uncapped oil wells; this is a crisis that cuts across demographics and zip codes. There are active, idle, and orphan wells in Mar Vista, San Pedro, the Fairfax District, Baldwin Hills, Vista Hermosa, Porter Ranch, Pacoima, and every corner of the City. The right to clean air, clean water, and healthy homes is fundamental and applies to us all. We have a right not to be poisoned where we are living. Unsafe development on or near uncapped oil wells has only exacerbated a delicate situation. Without proper precautions and enforceable standards, development on or near oil wells can trap dangerous and explosive gases, make it impossible to cap wells, and even trigger oil spills. Residents of the Vista Hermosa Heights community at the heart of the LA City Oil Field report foul odors, constant methane alarms, and oil leaks/spills in recent developments. New and existing residents are being exposed to toxic substances and are under constant threat of combustion, oftentimes without their knowledge. Urgent action is needed to address this crisis and protect current and future LA residents. CF 21-1395-S1 takes a much-needed first step to strengthen City oil safety and community toxic hazard protections. We urge you to vote yes on this item to begin the process of creating City policies that protect public health, establish safe development standards, ensure accountability, and include community knowledge and experience. We look forward to working with the Mayor, the Council, and the departments named in the motion to bring forward policies that protect and uplift all Angelenos.



Honorable Chairman and Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee,

The story of Los Angeles and the environmental conditions we live in cannot be separated from our history as an oil-rich region. In the early twentieth century, Los Angeles became one of the world's largest oil producers, generating nearly a quarter of the world's oil supply.

Today, there are more than [5,000 active, idle, and orphan wells in the City of Los Angeles](#). They are next to schools, community centers, and homes. Nearly [75% of active wells in the City are located near 'sensitive land use' facilities](#). The fact is that [3.3 million residents of Los Angeles County live near an uncapped oil well](#), and over 500,000 residents live within 1300 ft of a well. There are 68 named oil fields in the Los Angeles basin alone, representing thousands of wells and billions of gallons of oil.

Living near an oil well or on an oil field causes great harm to personal and collective health. [Exposure to toxic chemicals found in oil wells, such as benzene and methane, is directly linked to an increase in dizziness, headaches, respiratory system irritation, skin conditions, respiratory diseases, chronic illness, cardiac events, strokes, preterm births, and cancer.](#) From the San Fernando Valley to the Harbor, uncapped oil wells are a silent public health and environmental crisis that has and will continue to harm, incapacitate, and kill millions of Angelenos.

The harm is borne disproportionately by working-class communities of color. [The front-line communities living near two of the largest oil fields in the city, the Wilmington and LA](#)

[City Oil Fields, are majority Black and Latine and majority working poor.](#) The vast majority of communities surrounding the Inglewood Oil Field, the largest urban oil field in the country, are Black and Latine.

A [community-based study](#) conducted by Occidental College, the University of Colorado, and STAND-LA surveyed communities living near active drill sites on the La Cienega Oil Field; the households included reported being 90% non-white, and 75% renters with an average income of just over \$22,000. This study found higher asthma rates, respiratory irritations, and conditions in University Park and West Adams residents living near the drill sites. There are similar experiences and stories across the City, we cannot continue to allow such blatant examples of environmental racism and injustice.

No council district is immune from the harm of uncapped oil wells; this is a crisis that cuts across demographics and zip codes. There are active, idle, and orphan wells in Mar Vista, San Pedro, the Fairfax District, Baldwin Hills, Vista Hermosa, Porter Ranch, Pacoima, and every corner of the City. The right to clean air, clean water, and healthy homes is fundamental and applies to us all. We have a right not to be poisoned where we are living.

Unsafe development on or near uncapped oil wells has only exacerbated a delicate situation. Without proper precautions and enforceable standards, development on or near oil wells can trap dangerous and explosive gases, make it impossible to cap wells, and even trigger oil spills. Residents of the Vista Hermosa Heights community at the heart of the LA City Oil Field report foul odors, constant methane alarms, and oil leaks/spills in recent developments. New and existing residents are being exposed to toxic substances and are under constant threat of combustion, oftentimes without their knowledge.

Urgent action is needed to address this crisis and protect current and future LA residents. [CF 21-1395-S1](#) takes a much-needed first step to strengthen City oil safety and community toxic hazard protections. **We urge you to vote yes on this item to begin the process of creating City policies that protect public health, establish safe development standards, ensure accountability, and include community knowledge and experience.**

We look forward to working with the Mayor, the Council, and the departments named in the motion to bring forward policies that protect and uplift all Angelenos.

Sincerely,

Nicolas Gardner Serna
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Sunrise Movement Los Angeles

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Vista Hermosa Heights Community Group

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