

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(14) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 8/3/2017

Type of NC Board Action: Against unless Amended

Impact Information

Date: 08/14/2017

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 17-0447

Agenda Date:

Item Number: 19

Summary: The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council calls for a setback or buffer zone of 2,500 feet between oil and gas wells and schools, hospitals, parks, homes and other places where people live and gather. The distance MUST be specified so there is NO confusion in all subsequent documents in order to protect ALL Angelenos. With the inclusion of the foregoing, the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council urges that the study called for in CF 17-0447 be conducted expeditiously, that the amortization period in paragraph (2) of the motion be extremely limited, that the 'takings' addressed in Paragraph (3) be off-set by suing the oil and gas companies for damages they have caused to Angelenos, that the movement of these toxic chemicals also be addressed, and that action be taken swiftly and strongly enforced to protect residents in communities throughout Los Angeles.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Post Office Box 50791
Los Angeles, CA 90050
<http://www.highlandparknc.com>
Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

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Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council

August 3, 2017

Members of the Los Angeles City Council

200 N. Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

cc: Mayor Eric Garcetti
City Attorney Mike Feuer
Los Angeles Petroleum Administrator Uduak-Joe Ntuk
Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance

Re: CF 17-0447 Support for establishing a safety setback around oil/gas extraction in the City

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council which represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood commends the many members of the City Council who moved on June 30, 2017 to direct the City Attorney, Petroleum Administrator, and Department of Planning to perform a legal, land use, health, environmental, and economic study of limiting oil and gas operations within the City of Los Angeles.

We call on those concerned to protect all our residents, especially the young, the elderly and those who are pregnant or ill who are most vulnerable to the effects of chemicals released, by establishing a minimum setback of 2,500 feet to separate oil and gas extraction and production operations, both new and existing, from sensitive land uses such as homes, schools, parks, hospitals and other public places.

HHPNC – Support for establishing a safety setback around oil/gas extraction in the City

Los Angeles contains the largest and most densely populated urban oil field in the nation. There are over 1,000 active oil wells in the City of Los Angeles, and 80 percent of these wells are located within 2,500 feet of a sensitive land use such as a home, park, school, hospital, church or other public space. Oil and gas extraction sites routinely use and emit toxic chemicals, and these emissions are at their highest and most dangerous concentration at the source of pollution.

Additionally, more than half of the active wells are located in low-income Latino and African-American neighborhoods, such as Wilmington and South L.A., which are already overburdened by environmental hazards. Residents from these neighborhoods have documented serious health problems—including nosebleeds, chronic migraines, nausea, asthma, and other respiratory illness—in addition to daily disruption from drilling noise and vibrations, foul odors, and diesel truck traffic.

There is precedent for a health and safety buffer around drilling sites in Los Angeles. The City amended its zoning code in the 1940s, with an express declaration that "oil drilling and production in urbanized areas is detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare." Classifying these operations as non-conforming uses, i.e. incompatible with residential neighborhoods, resulted in the closure of hundreds of active oil wells, especially on the City's West Side.

As new technologies such as fracking come on line, wells discontinued decades ago in areas that have since become increasingly residential or given over to public purposes have been reopened, giving the need for setbacks a renewed sense of urgency. Furthermore, these companies refuse to divulge the chemicals they are using to frack wells yet their workers wear hazmat suits indicating exposure to these chemicals is hazardous to human health.

EVERY Angeleno deserves to live in a safe and healthy neighborhood. Oil drilling operations are wholly incompatible with residential neighborhoods, and we urge swift completion of the proposed legal and land use study. Upon timely completion of the study, we support the passage of a 2,500-foot setback ordinance to alleviate the symptoms and externalities that front-line communities experience daily.

People's lives are worth more than the profits of a dying industry. Climate change is real. Lawsuits cost the City both money and time. Industry lobbyists may move first but the long term expense of illness, remediation of the land, and the loss of trust of the people is worth far more. The oil and gas industry needs to be held accountable for past, present and future damage to our City and its people.

Therefore, the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council urges that the study be conducted expeditiously, that the setback be 2,500 feet, that the amortization period in paragraph (2) of the motion be extremely limited, that the 'takings' addressed in Paragraph (3) be off-set by suing the oil and gas companies for damages they have caused to Angelenos, that the movement of these toxic chemicals also be addressed, and that action be taken swiftly and strongly enforced to protect residents in communities throughout Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harvey Slater', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Harvey Slater, President

Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council