

Communication from Public

Name: Pico Robertson Health and Safety Coalition

Date Submitted: 12/02/2021 10:20 AM

Council File No: 21-1025

Comments for Public Posting: On October 15, 2021, three of the four candidates running for the position of City Controller in the 2022 elections issued a joint press release supporting NASE's appeal to City Council. Candidates Kenneth Mejia, David Vahedi, and Rob Wilcox joined together to say "We Support NASE's Appeal to City Council (CF-21-1025) to Require Proper Environmental Review of the West Pico Drill Site and Rejection of Illegal Oil Drilling." Copies of the joint press release from each of the three candidates are attached:

MENU



Press Release: West Pico Drill Site

Press Release

From candidates running for Los Angeles City Controller in the 2022 elections.

We Support NASE’s Appeal to City Council (CF-21-1025) to Require Proper Environmental Review of the West Pico Drill Site and Rejection of Illegal Oil Drilling

LOS ANGELES, October 15, 2021 –

We are three of the four candidates running for City Controller in the 2022 elections. We Support NASE’s Appeal to City Council (CF-21-1025) to Require Proper Environmental Review of the West Pico Drill Site and Rejection of Illegal Oil Drilling.

In June 2018, the current Controller, Ron Galperin, issued an excellent audit of the City’s regulation of the oil industry. The report made a thorough analysis and gave the City excellent recommendations that have generally not been implemented. Here is Controller Galperin’s summary of the purposes and major conclusions of his report (page i):



We initiated this review to determine if the City has:

- Established monitoring and enforcement programs to improve quality of life and public safety. We found that the City did not effectively enforce its land use decisions at drilling sites and we identified opportunities to improve how Fire Code inspections are performed.
- Required appropriate coverage to protect itself and its residents from financial risks associated with oil and gas wells. We noted the City does not have adequate insurance and surety bond requirements to protect taxpayers.
- Implemented effective processes to collect revenues and recover costs. We found that the City needs to do more to prioritize cost recovery, pursue new revenue streams, and ensure it receives the royalty revenue due from oil and gas operators.

Controller Galperin also addressed the issue of environmental reviews required by the State's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which had been a major failing of the City and the subject of a lawsuit the City settled in 2016. It seems the Department of City Planning and Office of the Zoning Administrator (DCP and OZA) misinformed the Controller about the supposed resolution of the problem. This is what Controller Galperin wrote about CEQA on page 7 of his report:

Historically, DCP/OZA processed applications for modifications to original conditions of approval using a limited review process, which did not require an Environmental Impact Report or public participation. In September 2016, DCP/OZA agreed to follow a more comprehensive review process for (new) applications under the Municipal Code, including environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), increased notification requirements to affected stakeholders, and public hearings. DCP/OZA staff indicated that no new applications have been received since the change in the City's review process.

In fact, since the promulgation of ZA Memo 133 in September 2016, the DCP/OZA had processed 3 major oil drill site applications with improper Categorical Exemptions from Environmental Review under CEQA before the issuance of Controller Galperin's report in June 2018 (4th Ave, Jefferson, and Rancho Park). Since then, DCP/OZA has processed two more major oil drill site cases with Categorical Exemptions (Jefferson and West Pico).

But the even more striking point buried in this is the DCP/OZA's use of the word "applications." That skirts the central problem that oil drill site operators in the City have repeatedly undertaken major projects without applying to the ZA for approval, which has been required by Municipal Code since 1945. The operators get away with this because the City does not do general compliance inspections and because – as the West Pico Drill Site case demonstrates – the DCP/OZA refuses to take action even when oil companies drill wells without the approvals required by City code.



It is important to underscore that project applications are what trigger review under CEQA. If projects are executed without the applications and approvals required by City law, then they are also executed without environmental review under CEQA. Both City and State law are violated, and it is the City's obligation under both City and State law to see to it that does not happen.

The West Pico Drill Site case (CF 21-1025), Environmental Review, and Illegal Oil Drilling:

We join together in unison to tell the public and City Council that we demand proper Environmental Review at the West Pico Drill Site in CD5 (9101 & 9151 W. Pico Blvd, LA 90035), and we adamantly oppose the City's tacit approval of illegal oil drilling.

We support the appeal to overturn the improper Categorical Exemption from CEQA submitted to City Council by Neighbors for A Safe Environment (NASE), a local non-profit environmental organization in the CD5 community. We ask all Council Members to vote in favor of NASE's appeal, which you can find here: Council File # 21-1025.

On January 1, 2023, there will be a new City Controller. We want the public and current members of City Council to know that if one of us wins election, we will not tolerate the evasion of legally required environmental reviews for oil drill sites, the evasion of legally required Zoning Administrator reviews for oil drill sites, and we will certainly not tolerate illegal oil drilling.

By-right oil drilling is not allowed in urban Los Angeles. It is time for the City to obey, implement, and enforce its own laws. Proper Environmental Review is required by the State's CEQA law, and it is the City's obligation to do such reviews.

It is the City Controller's job to audit the performance of City government, including its departments and agencies. Controller Galperin did that well in his June 2018 report on City oil regulation.

If one of us is elected to be the next Controller, we promise to pick up the issues from Controller Galperin's report and the continuing performance failures of City agencies, and to do all in our power to shine a light on it so that the public and City government can make appropriate changes.



We are three of the four candidates running for election as City Controller. The fourth candidate did not sign the statement.

Kenneth Mejia – campaign contact: kmejia@mejiaforcontroller.com

David T Vahedi – campaign contact: david@vahediforcontroller.com

Rob Wilcox – campaign contact: rob@robforcontroller.com

Paid for by Mejia for City Controller 2022, FPPC ID#: 1435234 1001 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 102, Los Angeles, CA, 90017. Additional information is available at
ethics.lacity.org.

Contact us at kenneth@mejiaforcontroller.com





Press Release

From candidates running for Los Angeles City Controller in the 2022 elections.

We Support NASE's Appeal to City Council (CF-21-1025) to Require Proper Environmental Review of the West Pico Drill Site and Rejection of Illegal Oil Drilling

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Controller Galperin also addressed the issue of environmental reviews required by the State's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which had been a major failing of the City and the subject of a lawsuit the City settled in 2016. It seems the Department of City Planning and Office of the Zoning Administrator (DCP and OZA) misinformed the Controller about the supposed resolution of the problem. This is what Controller Galperin wrote about CEQA on page 7 of his report:

3120 Kelton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90034 (310) 927-2920



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It is important to underscore that project applications are what trigger review under CEQA. If projects are executed without the applications and approvals required by City law, then they are also executed without environmental review under CEQA. Both City and State law are violated, and it is the City's obligation under both City and State law to see to it that does not happen.

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Kenneth Mejia – campaign contact: kmejia@mejiaforcontroller.com

David T Vahedi – campaign contact: David@Vahediforcontroller.com

Rob Wilcox – campaign contact: rob@robforcontroller.com



For Immediate Release

October 15, 2021

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Follow Wilcox's campaign on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#), and sign up for campaign updates [here](#). To donate to Wilcox's grassroots campaign, go to www.robforcontroller.com.

Paid for by Rob Wilcox for Controller 2022
10586 W Pico Blvd. #355, Los Angeles, CA 90064
Additional information is available at ethics.lacity.org

Communication from Public

Name: David N. Weiss

Date Submitted: 12/01/2021 08:44 PM

Council File No: 21-1025

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council, my name is David N. Weiss and I live at 1121 S. Doheny Dr., just several doors away from the Pico Drill site. Each day as I look out from my kitchen window the tower of the site looms high above my home. I attended the ZA and Planning Commission phone meeting in question and was astounded by how inappropriate was the ZA's desire to "move things along" in favor of continued illegal drilling. I deeply appreciate your willingness to hear the NASE's appeal and urge you take any and all available actions to overturn the ZA's outrageous and improper Categorical Exemption, which is allowing drilling to continue, despite the lack of full compliance with the city's own terms of agreement with the NASE and California law and city law. Please protect my family. Please protect my neighbors. Please require the called for environmental reviews of this unfortunate drill site and please end ALL illegal and/or potential dangerous drilling at this site. Thank you! David N. Weiss