

Communication from Public

Name: Pico Robertson Health and Safety Coalition
Date Submitted: 07/26/2022 03:07 PM
Council File No: 21-1025
Comments for Public Posting: Please see the appended letter from Sam Yebri, candidate for the open CD5 Council seat, to PLUM Committee Chair Marqueece Harris-Dawson, sent July 25, 2022. We do not support or endorse any candidate, but we thank Sam Yebri for speaking out in detail about the improper Categorical Exemption from environmental reviews in the West Pico Drill Site case.

July 25, 2022

Council Member Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Councilmember.Harris-Dawson@lacity.org

Re: Support Appeal Filed By NASE (Council File #21-1025)

Dear Council Member Harris-Dawson:

I am one of the two candidates running in the November 8, 2022 elections to become the new Council Member for the 5th Council District (“CD5”). As previously set forth in my letter dated September 21, 2021, I am writing to reiterate my strong support for the CEQA appeal filed by Neighbors for A Safe Environment (“NASE”) (Council File #21-1025) (the “Appeal”).

I understand that the City Council’s Planning and Land Use Management (“PLUM”) Committee will soon hold a hearing on the Appeal. For far too long, residents of Los Angeles, including families like my own in CD5, have been forced to live near dangerous and largely unregulated urban oil and gas wells that are active under our homes, schools, and homes of worship. I urge you to grant NASE’s appeal.

I join thousands of concerned residents in supporting the Appeal filed by NASE in September 2021. The Categorical Exemption from environmental review granted by the Zoning Administrator (“ZA”) is patently wrong. The ZA’s PA2 review of the drill site is governed by Condition 78 of the 2000 ZA approval in ZA-1989-17683-PAD. Condition 78 requires the ZA to “evaluate neighborhood impacts” and “the efficacy of mitigation measures,” which means that an environmental review is required and cannot be exempted. In addition, there is a documented record of 24 unapproved major oil well projects at this drill site, admitted to by the operating company in a June 19, 2020 email to the ZA and a July 8, 2020 letter to the ZA. Additional violations of law have occurred at the site, including the repeated failure to hold five-year cyclical ZA reviews required by the 2001 Settlement Agreement approved by the City Council.

The consequences of these violations are dire. In December 2021, a spill occurred outside the drill site caused by 20 years of pipeline safety violations. On February 16, 2022, SCAQMD issued a Notice to Comply for leaking equipment at the drill site (Notice to Comply # E54586).

The City Council cannot look the other way. The health and safety of our families and neighborhoods are being threatened. NASE’s appeal should be granted. The City of Los Angeles must perform a proper Environmental Review in the West Pico Drill Site case and reject the improper Categorical Exemption. I urge the City Council to grant the Appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SE' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Sam Yebri