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January 24, 2023

CONTACT

Kacey Bonner

kbonner@chromacollaborative.com

310-402-3013

Community Celebrates First Step Toward Widespread Phase Out of Oil Drilling in Los Angeles County

LA County Coalition to End Oil and Gas calls for further action to address the Inglewood Oil Field and advance environmental justice for frontline communities.

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted today to approve an ordinance that will prohibit new oil and gas extraction activities and phase out existing oil drilling in unincorporated Los Angeles County. This historic action, which does not address drilling in the Inglewood Oil Field, marks the first step toward ridding the nation’s most populous county of oil extraction that harms the health and safety of communities and the environment. The vote comes after Culver City and the City of Los Angeles passed similar measures in 2021 and last year, respectively, and follows an initial vote by the Board of Supervisors to approve the ordinance last fall.

“Communities deserve to breathe fresh air and live free of toxic industries that put their greed above our health,” **said Ruth Andrade, a frontline resident in South LA.** “This ordinance puts us one step closer to that reality and is a testament to the power of frontline communities who have been fighting to end oil drilling for the past decade. Because of people power, we are on the road to making the county a place where every Angeleno can breathe easier.”

Frontline residents living near oil wells and community organizations rooted in their neighborhoods have advocated for an end to neighborhood oil extraction for years, citing serious health conditions like asthma, miscarriages and cancer as the need to end the practice. Their stories, persistent advocacy over the past decade and demands for health and safety protections in their communities led to this ordinance being passed today.

“Community Health Councils applaud the County’s efforts in advancing policies that will finally put an end to the harms of oil drilling in areas that are largely located in underserved and under-resourced communities,” **said Dr. Michelle Burton, Deputy CEO of CHC.** “Now we can begin to focus on repair and revitalization in our neighborhoods led by community members who have been most impacted by these unjust practices for far too long.”

The ordinance developed by the County’s Department of Regional Planning prohibits new wells in unincorporated L.A. County, designates existing extraction activities a nonconforming land use in unincorporated L.A. County and establishes regulations for existing oil wells and

production facilities during the phase-out period. As in the City of Los Angeles, the County is conducting an amortization study to determine exactly how long the phase-out period for existing oil wells should be. This ordinance will begin to repair decades of racist land use policies that concentrated oil drilling in Black and Brown communities.

“It’s beyond thrilling that phasing out oil drilling is now the law of the land in the most populous county in the nation,” **said Damon Nagami, senior attorney at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)**. “Frontline residents, who are mostly people of color, have been calling for bold action like this for years to protect their health and achieve climate justice right in their own communities. Other oil-producing localities concerned with their residents’ health should take notice and follow LA’s lead.”

The effort to end oil drilling in L.A. County was championed by District 2 Supervisor Holly Mitchell – whose jurisdiction houses the Inglewood Oil Field – and Former L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

“Equity must be backed up by consistent action and this ordinance is an example of the accumulation of years of advocacy from residents and the County’s progress in strengthening environmental protections for our communities,” **said L.A. County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Second District**. “I’m proud to act in solidarity today with frontline communities as we usher in a cleaner, healthier future for L.A. County that will protect the wellbeing of residents and move us closer to our climate goals.”

In addition to protecting the health and safety of residents living near oil wells, the ordinance serves as a historic signal in the fight against climate change and will allow these lands that have historically harmed primarily communities of color to be repurposed for community benefit.

“LA County is on its way to righting decades of environmental injustice thanks to this historic vote,” **said Maya Golden-Krasner, deputy director of the Center for Biological Diversity’s Climate Law Institute**. “For our communities and our climate, Gov. Newsom should follow the county’s lead in getting California off the polluting oil and gas that are ravaging people’s health, neighborhoods and our wildlife all across the state.”

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