

The Culver Crest Neighborhood Association

10769 Northgate St., Culver City, CA 90230

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July 24, 2007

Maria B. Masis
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, Room 1354
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR
Project: Baldwin Hills Community Standards District
Address: 5640 South Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA
Applicant: Plains Exploration and Production Company (PXP)

Dear Ms. Masis:

This letter is written on behalf of the Culver Crest Neighborhood Association ("CCNA"), an association of more than 500 homeowners and residents living generally to the west of and immediately adjacent to the Inglewood Oil Field as recognized by the California Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR), field map #122.

The purpose of this letter is to provide the County of Los Angeles ("County") with our comments on the Notice of Preparation ("NOP") of a Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") concerning the proposal to implement a Community Standards District ("CSD") in Baldwin Hills to address zoning regulations for oil and gas production drilling in the Inglewood Oil Field.

This letter is submitted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") State Guidelines Section 15082(b) and 15083, as well as Public

Resources Code Section 21003.1(a). Because we have not yet received documents back yet from the County pursuant to a pending Public Records Act request, CCNA hereby expressly reserves the right to supplement these comments after access to such documents has been provided.

For the reader's convenience, these comments are provided in the order they appear in the County's NOP.

I.
COMMENTS ON THE ABBREVIATED TWO-PAGE NOTICE

Location: The two-page Notice of Preparation and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings which accompanied the full NOP lists the project "location" as 5640 South Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA. That is a nominal address only. The location of the proposed CSD covers a much larger area, consisting of more than 900 acres with over 1600 wells. The Notice's use of a single address is inadvertently misleading as to the size of the area targeted for regulation in the CSD overlay zone.

Description: The two-page Notice indicates the CSD will establish permanent development standards, operating requirements and procedures for oil and gas operations in the Baldwin Hills. This is unrealistic, particularly since the overlay zone is being created for the first time, and PXP was only asked for future drilling and operational activities that could occur in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field for the next 10 to 20 years. Moreover, as technology advances, both in terms of oil/gas drilling and in other areas such as public safety, those technological advances should be incorporated into the CSD standards.

Accordingly, we suggest a more realistic goal would be the adoption of initial development standards that should be subject to review for adequacy, success and refinement after an appropriate test period. We tentatively recommend that the CSD standards should initially be re-assessed after the first two years and every five years thereafter.

II.
COMMENTS ON THE MORE DETAILED 27-PAGE NOP

2.0 Proposed Project Description. Litigation has confirmed the importance of an accurate and thorough project description: "An accurate, stable and finite project description is the *sine qua non* of an informative and legally sufficient EIR." *County of Into v. City of Los Angeles*, 71 Cal. App. 3d 185, 193, 139 Cal. Rptr. 396 (1997). "Only through an accurate view of the project may affected outsiders and public decision-makers balance the proposal's benefit against its environmental cost, consider mitigation measures, assess the advantage of terminating the proposal (i.e., the 'no project' alternative) and weigh other alternatives in the balance." *Id.* at 192-93.

Here, the project description for establishing a new zoning overlay consists of three short superficial paragraphs. No contents of the proposed zoning regulations is provided. To form the CSD, the County will need to establish standards for new drilling, a process for new drilling applications, the type(s) of permits that will be required, notification requirements for interested parties, the scope of discretion in acting on new permits, findings to grant or deny new drilling permits, comprehensive standard conditions of approval, landscaping and aesthetic controls for new permits, a mechanism for coordinating with other interested jurisdictions such as the cities of Culver City and Los Angeles, means of enforcement, future compliance with CEQA, location of hearings, and other meaningful regulations and criteria. Mitigation fees or land dedication for parkland should be established for all new drilling. Meaningful sanctions for unauthorized odor violations need to be developed.

Without this information, the EIR will not have sufficient project details for analysis. The project description in the NOP must be expanded in the EIR. CCNA and other members of the public need to know the contents of the land use regulations the County is proposing to adopt as part of this project. At the moment, this is a critical deficiency.

2.2 Existing Conditions. The NOP does not indicate who owns the Baldwin Hills Oil Field land. This omission should be addressed in the EIR. The EIR should also provide an overview of the process for regulating oil drilling and operations. The EIR should discuss the County's mandatory and optional roles in such regulation. The EIR should specifically discuss the areas of discretion available to the County in regulating oil drilling and associated operations.

2.4 Project Objectives. CCNA suggests the following substitute project objectives:

1. Work in concert with other pertinent regulatory agencies, including the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City, the Los Angeles Community College District, the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, and the State Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources ("DOGGR") to establish a new zoning overlay district and accompanying regulations addressing needed development standards, operating requirements, and procedures for oil and gas drilling and operations in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.
2. Plan to review such zoning standards for refinement, adequacy and success after the first two years and periodically thereafter.
3. Address the unique compatibility concerns associated with operating an oil field in the midst of urban development, including substantial residential neighborhoods, a community college campus and multiple existing and contemplated parks/recreation facilities.

4. Minimize the environmental impacts of the oil field operations on the surrounding communities and uses.
5. Eliminate the risk of odors from oil and gas drilling and operations posing nuisance or health risks to surrounding communities and sensitive receptors.

2.5 Description of Future Drilling and Operational Activities. The NOP indicates that the County requested projections for PXP of their desired future drilling and operational plans for the next 10 to 20 years. What about historical records? What is the drilling history over the past 10 to 20 years? How can one assess the future plans without also knowing the past activities?

2.5.1 Drilling. It is difficult for CCNA to fathom PXP's need to drill an average of 53 new wells per year for the next 20 years. This is astounding. The Baldwin Hills Oil Field has been in operation for over 82 years. There have been approximately 1600 wells drilled in that time. That is an average of less than 20 new wells per year. Why would PXP suddenly now need to drill an average of 53 wells per year? What is the possible justification for that? Isn't drilling improving in efficiency, not decreasing in efficiency? And the surrounding communities have increased substantially over the years -- shouldn't the drilling activity reduce as the quantity and close proximity of potential sensitive receptors increases over time? The EIR needs to consider alternatives involving substantially fewer new drilling sites.

Quite frankly, we are shocked by some of the new well estimates: 85 new wells in one year in 2009?? 75 new wells in each of the four years thereafter? That totals 385 new wells in the space of five years, or an average of 77 new wells per year. What could possibly be the justification for such a vast demand for new wells?

We are most troubled by the projection of 233 new wells in the Viewshed over the next 20 years. This includes 106 new wells over then next seven years. Figure 2-4 shows that the Viewshed Drilling Area is the portion of the project site that is closest to CCNA homes. This is not acceptable. Drilling in the Viewshed should be minimized, if not avoided entirely. However, according to the NOP, outside of the Central Drilling Area, the Viewshed Drilling Area is projected to have the highest number of new wells. This makes no sense to CCNA and will be opposed.

As Culver City residents, we are also concerned about the prospect of 62 new wells being established in Culver City between years 2011 and 2015.

CCNA also questions why the drilling activity will decrease dramatically in year 2016 in other areas, but not in the Viewshed Area adjacent to our homes (and not in the Central Area). Why doesn't the drilling activity near CCNA homes decline over time?

According to the NOP, drilling is scheduled to occur 24 hours per day. Why is this necessary, particularly in the Viewshed Area adjacent to our homes? Very few other commercial activities are conducted 24 hours per day adjacent to residential neighbors. The EIR should evaluate the appropriateness and necessity of this round-the-clock activity adjacent to and impacting our neighborhood. No mention is made in the NOP of whether this will be evaluated; rather, it is stated as a given. The hours of operation need to be scrutinized by the County.

The NOP indicates that 47 new wells will be drilled to depths greater than 6,000 feet. Why are these deeper wells necessary? Where will they be located? We have been told by PXP that the deeper wells have greater risk of emitting gases that constitute a public nuisance and cause residents to vacate their homes. The EIR needs to consider where the deeper wells, if any, should best be placed. The EIR should also explain how the depth of the drilling will be monitored and regulated. The EIR should determine at what depths the risk of noxious or odorous gases is encountered.

We have heard that it is quite rare (if not unique) for deeper wells to be drilled in close proximity to densely populated urban areas. The EIR should examine the history of deep drilling generally, with particular reference to its history in urban areas.

2.5.3 Well Workovers and Abandonments. The NOP provides the historical maximum number of workover rigs operating in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field, but not the recent average. The EIR should disclose the historical average number of such rigs. The EIR should also explain how many workover rigs are needed per well, given the vast increase in drilling activity contemplated by PXP.

The NOP indicates that workover rigs are "typically" operated eight to twelve hours per day during "weekdays." It does not state whether they are also used on weekends. It also does not state what the maximum hours of operation could be during untypical use. The EIR should examine these unanswered questions.

The NOP provides PXP's estimate that over the next 20 years, approximately 640 wells would be plugged and abandoned. The EIR should disclose the anticipated abandonment schedule and location, just as the NOP discloses the projected drilling schedule in Table 2.1.

3.0 Scope of the EIR. The County should identify and describe other examples of community standards districts. The County should also identify and describe what other communities do to regulate oil drilling and operations occurring adjacent to residential communities, schools and parks. How do other communities regulate these operations?

3.1.1 Safety, Risk of Upset, and Hazardous Materials. The EIR should not only consider the potential for "acute" risk to offsite populations associated

with accidental releases, but also the potential for accidental odors constituting public nuisances to nearby residential communities, schools and parks. "Acute" risk is much too narrow a focus to capture the potential consequences of oil drilling and operations next to these sensitive receptors. The NOP is not broad enough to encompass our community's concerns and recent adverse experiences with offensive odors from the oil fields.

The NOP proposes to evaluate the likelihood of a release of "hazardous" materials from the Baldwin Hills Oil Field. In 2006, various releases of odorous gases forced our residents to vacate their homes in the middle of the night and caused serious reactions to people with respiratory ailments. PXP has repeatedly responded to CCNA that the released gases were not "hazardous." This did not fully address our concerns. Whether they were "hazardous" or not; these terrible uncontrolled odors were not acceptable to our community. The EIR must consider how to permanently avoid their re-occurrence.

The NOP fails to indicate whether the County will be obtaining information regarding the enforcement proceedings pursued by the South Coast Air Quality Management District ("SCAQMD") that resulted from the 2006 emissions. (Pub. Res. Code § 21003.1(b).) Regardless of whether the SCAQMD's investigation is continuing, their records on this emission should be made public pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21005(a). Records regarding such emission should also be obtained from PXP. *Id.* Such records should be made public as part of the EIR process. State CEQA Guidelines § 15002(a)(1).

The NOP proposes to evaluate "incremental changes in risk over the baseline." (NOP at p.13.) The EIR should not limit its consideration to changes in risk over the baseline; the EIR must also consider the acceptability of the baseline risks to the community. For example, the Baldwin Hills Master Plan notes:

"There are hundreds of abandoned wells in the Baldwin Hills area, many of which predate recent decades when abandoned wells have been required to be sealed under State supervision. Experience elsewhere, such as at the Los Angeles, Salt Lake, and Playa Vista oil field areas, indicate[s] the possibility of hydrocarbon (gas) seeps for those early vintage wells abandoned improperly." Master Plan at 15.

With regard to hazardous material transportation, the EIR should examine not only the increased frequency, but also the transportation routes, time of day and associated noise.

3.1.2 Air Quality. The preparers of the EIR should contact the City of Culver City Fire Department, Los Angeles County Fire Department/HazMat

Emergency Response Team, and SCAQMD regarding order incidents/complaints related to PXP's drilling/operations. Limiting the investigation of odor complaints to SCAQMD as suggested at page 15 of the NOP is not sufficient.

- The EIR investigation of odor incidents must include SCAQMD Emergency Response Notification #121860 regarding methane gas and hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) emissions from Vickers Well No. 1-935 commencing at approximately midnight on January 10-11, 2006.
- Another serious violation occurred the following month on February 7, 2006. Another series of violations occurred on April 7, 2006, related to the Vickers Pit.
- The EIR record should include all information, test results, investigation and enforcement actions related to SCAQMD Notice of Violation Nos. P48802 (issued on May 16, 2006) and P37137 (issued on February 17, 2006).
- Residents living in the areas closest to the oil fields should be contacted directly to determine the extent to which they have been bothered by oil field odors. Many residents at the top of Culver Crest have reported that they detect odors from the oil field on a weekly basis, but that they rarely contact the SCAQMD because the odors are not as strong as the major releases in 2006 and because they usually experience them in the middle of the night when they are trying to sleep.
- Representatives of West Los Angeles College should also be contacted concerning their odor nuisance problems from PXP's activities.

The NOP indicates the study area shall include the Los Angeles basin. The air quality/odor/public nuisance impacts of PXP drilling activities on CCNA residents and West Los Angeles College must specifically be studied in the EIR for this analysis to be adequate.

The potential for unauthorized releases of methane gas and hydrogen sulfide must be studied. The air circulation patterns in our neighborhood -- downhill from PXP's Viewshed drilling activities and within pockets of concentrated air circulation due to gullies, roadways, and wind patterns -- must be carefully studied in the EIR.

The NOP never states that on-site air sampling and analysis will be conducted to establish the air quality baseline; however, this data collection and analysis is critical to CCNA. The current and on-going air quality impacts of PXP cannot be adequately evaluated without on-site testing. While it may be acceptable to rely on existing data when attempting to analyze the extent to

which PXP is contributing to greenhouse gasses, ozone depletion or Southern California smog, this methodology would be completely inadequate for assessing the impact on adjoining neighborhoods of PXP's releases of odorous gasses, to say nothing of gasses that might be toxic or carcinogenic. As to these latter concerns, it is imperative that actual tests be conducted.

Furthermore, the EIR should acknowledge that the "baseline" of recent odor incidents and described in the NOP is not acceptable and needs to be prevented and eliminated. It will not be sufficient for the EIR to explore mitigation that "could reduce the frequency of odor events." NOP at p. 15. Rather, these must be eliminated before any new drilling is permitted. If future violations or odor incidents occur, then severe penalties need to be imposed such as shutting down PXP's drilling operations for six months while the reasons for the release are studied and new mitigation measures are developed. Moreover, periodic future on-site monitoring of air quality must be imposed as a condition of future PXP activities in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.

3.1.3 Biological Resources. There is ample wildlife on the property and in the area, including hawks, owls, raccoons, and other species. The May 2002 Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan (the "Master Plan"), which was prepared on behalf of the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy (and which can be found on the Conservancy's web page at http://www.bhc.ca.gov/documents/Baldwin_Hills__Master_Plan_Final.pdf), should be reviewed for baseline documentation, potential impacts and mitigation measures. The Master Plan notes:

"While the Baldwin Hills are degraded and fragmented, they still provide important habitat for animals that depend on coastal scrub species . . . Some [species that are dependent on this habitat or 'habitat specialists'] . . . are still present and others have recently disappeared from the area and become locally extinct." Master Plan at 21.

The Master Plan also notes, "A number of bird species are found in the Baldwin Hills that do not breed in the surrounding urbanized lowland areas." Master Plan at 27.

As to potential adverse impacts, the Master Plan expressly notes the ongoing "degradation due to . . . oil development." Master Plan at 3.

When preparing the EIR, local residents should be interviewed to assist in identifying the presence of wildlife that exists in the study area. Special attention should be paid to the peregrine falcon. Master Plan at 27. Other species of concern include the coast horned lizard, a California Department of Fish and Game ("CDFG") Species of Concern found only in coastal scrub habitat. Master Plan at 26. The garden slender salamander is also a CDFG Species of Concern

that historically occurred in the Baldwin Hills. *Id.* Several bird species that require this habitat may also have disappeared in recent years, including the greater roadrunner, cactus wren and California thrasher. Master Plan at 27. The rufous-crowned sparrow is another one. *Id.* Other CDFG Species of Concern include the burrowing owl, belted kingfisher, olive-sided flycatcher, Swainson's thrush, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, blue grosbeak and tri-colored blackbird. Two bat species of concern possibly still occurring in the Baldwin Hills are the pallid bat and the western mastiff bat. Master Plan at 28. Another California species of special concern that could potentially occur in the Baldwin Hills is the Los Angeles pocket mouse. *Id.*

As to biological mitigation, the Master Plan indicates:

"The recent nature of many local extinctions, continued presence of some habitat specialists and the expanses of relatively intact habitat suggest that there is good potential for habitat restoration . . . [I]t is important to re-connect habitat areas in the Baldwin Hills and to maintain habitat corridors between similar habitats." Master Plan at 21.

"Establishing corridors between habitat fragments can increase re-colonization rates thereby improving long term viability of species." Master Plan at 28.

Habitat Restoration Priorities are shown on Figure 10 of the Master Plan. Figure 10 shows that various portions of the proposed CSD have been identified as "priority [habitat] restoration areas" and key habitat links. Master Plan at 30.

3.1.5 Geological Resources. The NOP fails to mention the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan. The Master Plan acknowledges: "The Baldwin Hills have a well-documented history of landslide and erosion problems." Master Plan at 15. The Master Plan also states:

"A significant subsidence area has developed over the years over the oil field . . . [T]he center of the oil field has subsided more than 10 feet since the 1920s as a result of extraction of hydrocarbons and brine water." Master Plan at 14.

The Master Plan found that "[p]revious small ground movements and faulting have been associated with oil field activities and processes including withdrawal-induced subsidence and pressure injection." Master Plan at 14-15.

Furthermore, the Master Plan projects additional geologic impacts from ongoing drilling/extraction:

“It is possible, considering the intensified oil field operations activity of the past few years, that a few inches of localized ground movements may continue to occur in the northwest part of the oil field, which is the most active area of extraction since the 1970s.”
Id.

In this regard, the EIR must estimate and evaluate the volume and locations of PXP's proposed grading.

3.1.6 Transportation/Circulation. CCNA questions whether the ITE manual will have accurate and reliable data regarding urban oil fields. On-site studies of the existing facilities should be conducted to ascertain the appropriate trip generation rates for this use.

3.1.7 Land Use/Policy Consistency Analysis. The proposed project involves establishing a new zoning overlay. There will be much land use/policy analysis to be done before this can be accomplished. This includes investigating what regulations exist in other urban areas that permit oil drilling and contacting experts working in this field of study.

As discussed above, the CSD needs to establish standards for new drilling, a process for new drilling applications, the type(s) of permits that will be required, notification requirements for interested parties, the scope of discretion in acting on new permits, findings to grant or deny new drilling permits, comprehensive standard conditions of approval, landscaping and aesthetic controls for new permits, a mechanism for coordinating with other interested jurisdictions such as the cities of Culver City and Los Angeles, means of enforcement, future compliance with CEQA, location of hearings, and other meaningful regulations and criteria. Mitigation fees or land dedication for parkland should be established for all new drilling. Sanctions for unauthorized odor violations must be imposed.

Furthermore, the NOP fails to mention the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan. The inconsistency between PXP's proposed drilling and the policy of converting the study area to public parkland must be studied in the EIR. The feasibility of converting portions of the study area to parkland in consideration for granting new permits for drilling needs to be studied in the EIR. The Master Plan correctly states:

“The Baldwin Hills area is one of the most park-poor in California, with barely one acre of park space per 1,000 people, it falls far below the nationally recommended standard of six to ten acres per 1000 people. The Baldwin Hills Park will serve as a recreation nucleus for residents who live in this highly

under-served area." Master Plan at 32 (emphasis added). See also Fig. 11, Master Plan at p. 35.

3.1.8 Noise and Vibration. The NOP indicates that noise and vibration measurements will be taken at residents in close proximity to the oil field. This must include residences in CCNA. Furthermore, given PXP's 24-hour activities, such measurements must include not only daytime readings, but also nighttime readings as well.

The NOP indicates that noise impacts will be evaluated "against appropriate significance criteria." NOP at 19. What are the relevant thresholds of significance that will be used for this study? Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(a), each public agency is encouraged to develop and publish thresholds of significance that the agency uses in the determination of the significance of environmental effects. A "threshold of significance" is "an identifiable quantitative, qualitative or performance level of a particular environmental effect, non-compliance with which means the effect will normally be determined to be significant by the agency." (State CEQA Guidelines § 15064.7(a).)

For purposes of this EIR, the County should establish separate thresholds of significance for "off-hours" noise resulting from PXP's 24/7 hours of operation. Furthermore, such thresholds of significance must account for the close proximity of area residents and students attending West Los Angeles College.

The NOP fails to mention West Los Angeles College in its discussion of the noise impact study; this deficiency must be cured.

The noise study must also account for the unique terrain between the Baldwin Hills Oil Field and CCNA. This is not flat terrain where sound more naturally dissipates as it travels. Rather, most of the CCNA terrain is downhill, funneling noise from the Oil Field directly towards area residences.

3.1.9 Recreation. This discussion in the NOP fails to reference the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan. The intended future use of this site for public parkland must be studied. The inherent conflict between new drilling and this public use is a potentially significant impact that needs to be studied in the EIR.

The locations for closure of existing wells and the drilling of new wells need to be examined in light of the goal to establish new parkland in the study area. The parkland implications of changing the zoning from Agricultural to CSD must be fully evaluated in the EIR. State CEQA Guidelines, App. G, Issue XIV.

Per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15386, the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Baldwin Hills Conservancy should be listed as Trustee Agencies.

3.1.10 Fire Protection/Emergency Services. The EIR should examine and describe the fire history, spill history and permit and fire/building and safety inspection history of the Baldwin Hills Oil Field. The Fire Department for the City of Culver City should be contacted for incidents to which they have responded on the Baldwin Hills Oil Field and what they discovered when they were deployed.

The preparers of the EIR should be specifically aware of the fire and accident on September 2, 2004, at Vickers 1-635. This fire incident led to the DOGGR's Final Order Imposing Civil Penalty No. F 104-4, dated January 3, 2005, and the DOGGR's Notice of Deficiency dated September 30, 2004. This incident is also belatedly reflected in the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Hazardous Materials Spill Report # 07-1732, dated March 18, 2007.

The preparer's of the EIR should also be aware of the DOGGR's Notice to Operators dated June 29, 2005, regarding the failure of oilfield operators to report blowouts, fires, serious accidents and significant leaks or spills.

The State Office of Emergency Services should also be contacted regarding their experiences in this regard.

3.1.12 Aesthetics/Visual Resources. We agree with the need to study the aesthetic impacts, including screening, lighting, and landscaping. The Baldwin Hills Master Plan correctly anticipates that oil production facilities are the "most objectionable views" in the area. Master Plan at 43.

3.1.13 Energy Resources. The Baldwin Hills Oil Field is already a quite active energy production resource. According to the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources' *2006 Preliminary Report of California Oil and Gas Production Statistics* (Pub. No. PR03, issued Jan 2007), the Inglewood (i.e., Baldwin Hills) field was the highest producing field in the entire District 1, with the sole exception of Wilmington. In 2006, the Inglewood field produced approximately 3,270,000 bbl.

Given this high volume, it is extremely feasible for PXP to undertake aggressive mitigation measures to reduce and eliminate the potential significant impacts of their drilling operations. The EIR should be thorough and complete in its identification and evaluation of potential mitigation measures to address all of PXP's adverse impacts on our neighborhood. State CEQA Guidelines § 15041(a).

State CEQA Guidelines Section 21002 affirmatively states:

"The Legislature finds and declares that it is the policy of the state that public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects, and that the procedures

required by [CEQA] are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed projects and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects."

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15364 defines the term "feasible" as follows:

" 'Feasible' means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors."

The annual revenues generated 3.270 million barrels of oil can fund substantial mitigation measures for our community.

3.2.1 Agriculture. As noted in the NOP, while the vast majority of the Baldwin Hills Oil Field is zoned Heavy Agriculture (A-2), it is not used for agricultural purposes. The NOP asserts that the project site "would not be considered prime agricultural land" and that because the property is not in use for agricultural purposes, "there would be no impacts to agriculture" by the proposed CSD or the future drilling and operational activities.

However, Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines expressly asks whether the project would "[c]onflict with existing zoning for agricultural use . . . ?" Here, the response to this question must be "yes," resulting in a potentially significant adverse environmental impact that should be studied in the EIR. By facilitating additional drilling activities on the project site, the CSD will be impeding the use of this land for farming consistent with its zoning. The County needs to consider whether any impact methodologies have been developed for this analysis pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21095. The NOP contains no indications that this has been considered. As such, this analysis is legally inadequate at the present time.

4.0 Alternatives to the Proposed Project.

No Project Alternative. The "No Project" Alternative should consider the alternative of prohibiting all new drilling until new technologies are developed to ensure that there is no risk of inadvertent emission of methane gas or hydrogen sulfide. The existing land use regulations are a moratorium against new drilling. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(A), the "No Project" Alternative should examine continuation of the existing moratorium. The existing 436 active wells provide PXP with a constitutionally fair return.

Public Park [NEW]. The project alternatives should consider establishing a public park consistent with the "One Big Park Concept" set forth in the Baldwin Hills Master Plan. (See Fig. 18 of the Master Plan.)

Farming [NEW]. The project alternatives should consider the alternative of using the land for farming consistent with the current zoning.

Reduced Drilling Alternative [NEW]. The project alternatives must consider a reduced density alternative. We suggest this reduced density alternative should eliminate all new drilling in the Viewshed Area, given its adjacency to CCNA homes.

5.0 Cumulative Effects [NEW]. The NOP fails to indicate whether cumulative impacts of the existing and proposed drilling will be analyzed in the EIR. CEQA requires that an EIR consider the potential cumulative effects of a proposed project. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(h)(1). CEQA defines "cumulatively considerable" as meaning when "the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects." *Id.*

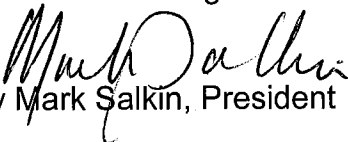
According to Section 2.2 of the NOP, the Baldwin Hills Oil Field currently has 436 active production wells, 207 water injection wells, 177 shut-in wells, and 643 plugged and abandoned wells. Table 2.1 shows the contemplated addition of 1,065 new wells over the next 20 years. Furthermore, Section 2.5.3 of the NOP estimates that 640 wells will be plugged and abandoned over the next 20 years. Consistent with the obligations under CEQA, the EIR will need to consider the potential cumulative effects of the proposed new drilling combined with the existing and prior drilling and projected plugging and abandonment.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for giving CCNA the opportunity to review and comment on the County's NOP concerning these important issues to our community.

Finally, CCNA hereby official requests notice of all public hearings, the release of all public documents related to this project (including all CEQA documentation), and all other related County actions concerning the proposed CSD, PXP's current operations, or any future proposals concerning the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.

Yours truly,
Culver Crest Neighborhood Association


By Mark Salkin, President

cc: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., Los Angeles County Counsel
Bruce McClendon, Los Angeles County Planning Director
Charles D. Herbertson, Culver City Public Works Director
Carol Schwab, City Attorney of Culver City
Joseph Liaw, SCAQMD
CCNA Board of Directors
Steve Rusch, Vice-President, PXP
Mark Rocha, President, West Los Angeles College
Camille Goulet, General Counsel, Los Angeles Community College District
Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Chair, Baldwin Hills Conservancy
David F. McNeill, Executive Officer, Baldwin Hills Conservancy
Rosana Miramontes, Deputy Attorney General
Hal Bopp, State Oil and Gas Supervisor
Cynthia Dunne Traxler, Senior Staff Counsel, Dep't of Conservation
Ruth Coleman, Director, California State Parks
Bobby Shriver, Chair, California State Park and Recreation Commission