

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 30, 2021

The Honorable Luz Rivas
Chair, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
State Capitol, Room 3126
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 47 (Limon) - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Rivas:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to state our support for Senate Bill 47 (Limon), which will allow the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) to spend up to 5 million dollars a year on plugging and abandoning deserted oil wells, and will require the Department of Conservation to provide an update on the report to the Legislature annually.

Oil & gas development has occurred in Santa Barbara County since as early as the 1890's and a significant amount of historic, abandoned infrastructure associated with discontinued operations is located within the County. Local jurisdictions have limited ability to require upgrading of aged infrastructure, and to enforce existing safety-related and environmental protection-related laws and ordinances.

California is expected to see more deserted wells in the future. Leaving wells idle is often done out of a desire to defer decommissioning costs. Some operators may eventually declare bankruptcy and forfeit any requirements to decommission their wells.

This bill will allow CalGEM to plug and abandon a number of deserted wells in California moving into the future. Plugging and abandoning these wells protects the health and safety of nearby communities. Allowing CalGEM to collect these funds from the oil industry in California insures these costs are not passed along to the taxpayer.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 2021 Legislative Platform which includes the Oil and Gas Infrastructure Safety and Compliance Legislative plank that specifically states that the County will support funding for cleanup/removal of historic, abandoned oil and gas wells and equipment where there is no existing responsible party with an urgent priority targeting wells that pollute the marine environment, as well as for equipment that creates public safety/nuisance concerns.

For these reasons, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support SB 47. If you have questions about the Board's position, please contact the County's Legislative Coordinator, Jasmine McGinty at 805-568-3108 or jmcginty@countyofsb.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Samantha Omana, Office of Senator Monique Limon
The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Michael Jarred, Senior Consultant, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Todd Moffitt, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
The Honorable Assemblymember Steve Bennett, 37th Assembly District
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