

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND
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JULY 28, 2015

**Ensuring Well Stimulation Activities Adequately Protect Public Health and Safety
Relates to S-3**

On July 9, 2015, the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) released an “Independent Scientific Assessment of Well Stimulation in California” (Report). The Report was completed per adoption of Senate Bill 4 (Pavley) in 2013, which required the State of California Division of Oil Gas and Geothermal Resources to develop comprehensive regulations over hydraulic fracking throughout California. There are a number of noteworthy points made in the report, including:

- Hydraulic fracking in California is very different than what is happening in other states due to existing regulations and the specific geology present in the state;
- Hydraulic fracking is not considered that impactful when considered against the overall potential impacts of oil and gas production; and
- Given the geology, it is unlikely that hydraulic fracking will be used throughout the Los Angeles County Basin.

Overall, the Report concludes that more research is needed to better understand the potential environmental and health implications of oil and gas production activities. While the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) does not have legal authority to regulate the drilling-related activities that take place below ground, it does have the ability to regulate above ground drilling operations and related activities.

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The Board has capitalized on this role most notably at the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF), which is the largest urban oil field in the State and is currently regulated by the Department of Regional Planning through a Community Standards District (CSD) and Settlement Agreement. Both the CSD and the Settlement Agreement have put in place extensive protections pertaining to air quality, ground water, seismic activity, noise, sounds, smells and other environmental issues.

While the CCST Report did make references to the monitoring and analysis that has been done pertaining to drilling activities at the IOF, there is still concern that the Report did not adequately consider or appreciate the depth of environmental monitoring and analysis that has been done and is required on an ongoing basis for the IOF. For example, the Report did not expressly consider the Environmental Impact Report for the IOF, nor did it fully take into account the two-year-long Air Quality Monitoring Study of the perimeter of the oil field as well as the required point-source air quality monitoring at drill sites, the Community Health Assessment and the historic knowledge and ongoing monitoring of ground water below the field. The Report also did not take into account the regulatory requirements that the IOF must comply with as part of the CSD and Settlement Agreement. While it is not clear from the Report, it is also important to note that hydraulic fracking is not currently taking place at the IOF, and the County is aware of no plans to do so. However, in follow-up communication with the CCST, the authors have clarified that they consider the IOF to have “more protections than other oil fields in the State”.

The Board and residents of the community surrounding the IOF should feel confident that adequate protections are in place to continue to promote and protect the health, safety and well-being of the surrounding residents. However, the Report does pose various questions, including whether adequate protections are in place for other fields that may be operating in cities and unincorporated areas throughout the County. The Report also provides further justification of the need for additional study of the potential impacts of oil and gas productions Statewide.

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WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Director of the Department of Regional Planning, in consultation with the Interim Director of the Department of Public Health, to develop a detailed inventory of all oil fields currently operating within the jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles, including whether the fields are operating by-right and the level of environmental monitoring currently required, as well as a review of the zones in which drilling activities would be permitted, and report to the Board in writing within 120 days with recommendations on a strategy to ensure optimal, appropriate and consistent regulation of these facilities.

WE FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Interim Chief Executive Officer to pursue all appropriate legislative strategies to ensure that sufficient funding is made available for the State of California to continue to study the potential environmental and health impacts associated with oil and gas production activities throughout the State, and report back as part of the routine legislative updates with a status and progress report on steps taken to accomplish this task.

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