

Notice of Intention to Circulate Petition

Notice is hereby given by the persons whose names appear hereon of their intention to circulate this petition within the County of San Benito for the purpose of protecting the County's groundwater supplies and preserving its rural heritage by restricting land uses related to oil and gas operations. A statement of the reasons of the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows:

San Benito County is at a tipping point. It could soon face a proliferation of proposals to conduct hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") and other high-intensity petroleum operations (such as cyclic steam injection, acid fracking, and acid matrix stimulation) to extract oil and gas from the Monterey Shale formation and other deposits in the County's unincorporated areas. Advances in extraction technology enable the petroleum industry to access previously untapped resources, which lie below our homes, farms and natural areas.

Our County cannot accept the dangers posed by fracking and other high-intensity petroleum operations. Any land uses supporting these practices should be prohibited as they pose many risks to the land, water, and public health of San Benito residents. For example:

- Fracking and other high-intensity petroleum operations typically inject massive amounts of water, steam and/or chemicals into the ground at high pressure, putting our residents and farms at risk for accidental toxic releases, groundwater contamination, sinkholes, and earthquakes. Given our County's high seismic activity (San Andreas and Calaveras faults), these risks are unacceptable.
- San Benito County gets much of its freshwater from limited groundwater supplies. Fracking and other high-intensity operations will deplete our precious groundwater by using hundreds of thousands of gallons of water per well. In addition, these operations can produce large volumes of wastewater containing hazardous chemicals that must be stored or disposed of in underground wells, which could leak and contaminate groundwater.
- Fracking and other high-intensity petroleum operations threaten to fragment and industrialize the County's agricultural areas. The noise, truck traffic, accidents and congestion found in fracking boom areas would destroy our rural way of life.
- High-intensity petroleum operations undermine tourism in the County by diminishing the natural beauty of our area, making our State and National parks and agricultural assets less appealing to visitors.

Even conventional, low-intensity petroleum operations can have negative effects if located in the wrong places. These operations can increase noise, traffic, and odors, and also degrade neighborhood appearance. Hence, they are incompatible with residential uses and should be prohibited in all residential areas.

This Initiative puts residents back in control of County land use decisions related to petroleum operations. Specifically:

- This Initiative prohibits the use of any land within the County’s unincorporated area for fracking and other high-intensity petroleum operations.
- This Initiative prohibits the use of land for any petroleum operations within the County’s unincorporated residential areas.
- At the same time, this Initiative contains reasonable provisions protecting vested rights and constitutionally protected property rights.

Signed by:

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