



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Comment Form – Draft EIR

Proposed Excelaron Conditional Use Permit (DRC2009-00002)

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Comment:

The topic of the oil drilling in Huasna Valley brings up a multifaceted array of issues and problems, and at the top of that list is safety. It is said that the oil drilling will bring 35 new jobs to the county of San Luis Obispo. That means there are 35 more people in a valley that very rarely sees traffic on the road. The majority of the "traffic" includes deer, wild pigs, herds of turkeys, red-tailed hawks, the occasional condor or mountain lion and very often, cattle. For those not accustomed to a windy road, it can be very dangerous, especially if they do not expect a creature in the road around the next turn. This leads to accidents. But how is an accident handled if there is no cell service? If this oil drill is to be put into place, will there be a Police Officer or a Sherriff constantly patrolling? How is this resolved? Also, as a resident of Huasna Valley, I do not feel safe having a multitude of people coming in and out of the valley at a constant flow while I'm at work, away from the valley. There is no law enforcement out there and it is a known fact that patrolling deters criminal acts. Will there be a patrol car sent out once or twice a day in order to ensure this?

Huasna Valley lays just next to the Los Padres National Forest, is located about 30 minutes from the nearest store (Last Chance Liquor, which suits its name quite accurately), and, according to Googlemaps.com, the Arroyo Grande Fire Department is 30 minutes away. Huasna Valley has beautiful, tree-lined and very curvy roads and is described as currently being at a "moderate level" of danger for a forest fire.

Now imagine that this proposed oil well is drilled, and suppose that oil drill catches on fire, which is not an uncommon occurrence. It will take a minimum of 30 minutes for the fire department to arrive on scene. But that is with a normal car, a fire truck cannot go as fast especially due to the terrain, so in actuality it will take

more than 30 minutes to arrive upon the scene. But, the Arroyo Grande Fire Department isn't the department that would fight a fire in Huasna Valley; CAL Fire would be the department to call and the Pismo Beach Department is 36 minutes away and the San Luis Obispo Department is 51 minutes away. That is over 30 minutes that a fire has been at its own free will spread as it wishes, ravishing over farms and ranches. Now, after more than 30 minutes the fire trucks begin arriving on the scene, but this fire is already growing, and already moving away from any fire truck's reach due to the rural terrain and area of Huasna Valley. Now what? Do they call in for air support? How long does that take? And how far has this fire gone by then? How many homes are destroyed and how many families no longer have a home because the county believed it'd be smart to put an oil well in the middle of nowhere, smack center of a fire hazard area? Not only has the fire spread, but also it is fueled not just by the winds in the valley, the oxygen in the air but by oil. The oil is a constant supplier for this fire and is one of the hardest fires to possibly put out, so nearly any and all efforts being made are nearly in vain. There are other factors to consider as well, such as does the county of San Luis Obispo have the resources to enact their OES to come to the rescue of all these families? Do they have the resources to save and/or evacuate all the livestock in the valley, seeing as this valley has several ranchers who's family is provided for by the livestock industry. Another strong factor to consider is the issue of water. Each property in Huasna Valley receives its water from a well, but these are never ending supplies, and may not be enough to fight a massive oil well fire. Does the county have enough manpower, and helicopters to fight this kind of fire? Does the county have any sort of plan to combat this potential issue? This isn't a highly blown out of proportion scenario. This is a highly probable situation. The proposed oil well is directly near the national forest and is in no location where it can be safely controlled and sure that no fire can break out and ruin the national forest and the Huasna Valley community.

Just please look at the facts. These are families you are hurting. There is safety involved in this. This safety is high-priced but a demanded request by the residents. But the safety is not cost effective. The amount required to implement the safety is more than the oil drilling is even worth. Focus the time and the effort on more energy efficient and citizen-approved topics. How can the same county that wants to put in a solar farm be the same county that wants to ruin one of its most beautiful areas?

The county does not have the resources or the manpower to deal with all of the negative aspects that this oil drill is bringing, and would do much better to turn down the oil drill. Think about the people instead of the money because the people are your friends and your neighbors, and the money is going to be counteracted entirely by the cost of the negative factors. Please, do NOT drill in Huasna Valley. Please don't ruin my home.

Whitney Buckingham