BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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ADAM HILL
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT THREE

March 7, 2016

Sent via USPS and electronic mail:

David Albright
U.S. EPA, Region 9
Manager, Drinking Water Protection Section, WTR-9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
albright.david@epa.gov

RE: Proposed Arroyo Grande Oil Field Aquifer Exemption

Dear Mr. Albright:

As the elected 3rd District Supervisor for the County San Luis Obispo, California, I have in my district the Arroyo Grande Oil Field ("AGOF"). I have heard a number of concerns from several of my constituents regarding the Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources's recommendation for an aquifer exemption for Class II injection wells in the AGOF. In turn I would like to share these concerns with you as you evaluate and consider the momentous decision you have before you.

The chief concern is contamination threats to nearby drinking water wells. As you may know, California is in the middle of a severe drought that has depleted a substantial amount of our ground water. This one issue has become THE issue we struggle to address every day. I want to make sure that when people in our community turn their faucets on that water comes out. In my district alone we are working on developing two new water sources. Our main source of drinking water, Lopez Lake, is projected to fail by 2017/2018 if the drought persists. So, as we fight to procure new water sources, we must not forget to protect what little water we currently have.

There are also concerns over the criteria used to determine the beneficial use of the water in the AGOF. While in the past oil production may have been the highest and best use of the ground water in the AGOF, currently technology for water reclamation/treatment has advanced in leaps and bounds as California and many other parts of the world experience prolonged periods of dire drought. In fact, a portion of the water extracted from the AGOF is treated and discharged into Pismo Creek, where it helps maintain the habitat for the endangered California steelhead and tidewater goby.

While I recognize and respect that authority for aquafer exemption lies with the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("USEPA"), it is my duty as our public's representative to voice their concerns over an aquifer exemption, especially during a historic drought. No matter what one's opinion of fossil fuel generated power may be, all of us can and should agree that in the ongoing devastation of California's drought, no regulation that can ensure greater safety of drinking water or potential drinking water should be ruled out.

To this end, on behalf of the residents of the 3rd District, I respectfully ask that the USEPA do everything in your power to protect our existing and potential drinking water. We would also like to request a public meeting in San Luis Obispo, California, so that my constituents can interact with the USEPA decision makers on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ADAM HILL
District 3 Supervisor
San Luis Obispo County

cc (via electronic mail):

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