

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

May 13, 2025

Advancing the County’s Long-term Health, Accountability, and Just Transition Goals During the Phase Out of Urban Oil Drilling

The Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken decisive local action to mitigate the harms to health and safety caused by urban oil drilling, which directly impacts tens of thousands of residents living near extraction sites — the majority of whom are people of color. These actions have included assembling a Strike Team to assess the public health and safety risks associated with oil and gas facilities across the County, commissioning numerous reports and studies of the current conditions at extraction sites, and creating an Office of Oil and Gas, an interdepartmental team housed within the Department of Public Works to coordinate local oversight and interagency communications. Most recently, in 2021, given the substantial body of research¹ on the detrimental health effects of living near oil drilling operations—including increased risks of respiratory diseases, poor birth outcomes, and impacts on well-being—the Board adopted policies to prohibit new oil wells and production facilities, designate oil and gas extraction as a nonconforming land use, and create a roadmap² for an equitable just transition for workers and communities impacted by the phase out of oil drilling.

The State of California (State) has also taken additional legislative and regulatory action to protect communities from the impacts of oil drilling. In 2024, despite significant

¹ [Report on Public Health and Safety Risks of Oil and Gas Facilities in Los Angeles County](#)

² [LA County-City Just Transition Strategy w Appendices_FINAL 12.5.22.pdf](#)

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opposition from the oil industry and backed by robust public health findings³, Senate Bill (SB) 1137⁴ went into effect, establishing Health Protection Zones that prohibit new oil drilling and non-essential maintenance activities within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, and healthcare facilities. Additionally, SB 1137 requires oil and gas production wells and production facility operators within a Health Protection Zone to submit a leak detection and response plan (LDRP) by July 1, 2028. The LDRP includes installing a continuous emission detection system, an alarm system to alert operators of leaks, a response protocol for identifying and repairing leaks, and notification to surrounding communities if the leak source is not identified or fixed within 48 hours. Operators must fully implement the approved LDRP or suspend production by July 1, 2030. While SB 1137 affords significant protections for communities living near oil wells, the oil industry has continued to challenge its implementation and enforceability, highlighting the need for further analysis, oversight, and additional protections at the local level to address potential gaps.

Additionally, in 2024, the State Legislature passed two laws that support the County's policies related to oil drilling: Assembly Bill (AB) 1866⁵ and AB 3233⁶. AB1866 increases fees on idle wells and raises the minimum percentage of idle wells that operators are required to eliminate each year, actions that support the County's efforts to identify and prioritize idle wells in need of plugging and abandonment, while ensuring accountability from oil operators for the costs. Governor Gavin Newsom also signed AB 3233 into law, which clarifies and confirms the authority of local governments to limit or prohibit oil and gas operations within their jurisdictions. This legislation reinforces the constitutional powers of local jurisdictions over land use, enabling them to implement measures that protect public health and the environment. The County is currently updating its adopted Oil Well Ordinance to reflect the language in AB 3233.

Given the need and opportunity to strengthen the County's Oil Well Ordinance through this update, it is timely to consider recent legislative and regulatory updates, advance our local efforts that have been bolstered by recent laws, and address any remaining gaps to provide stronger health and safety protections for our local communities. For example, in a 2023 report⁷ to the Board assessing changes in oil drilling

³ [Public Health Dimensions of Upstream Oil and Gas Development in California: Scientific Analysis and Synthesis to Inform Science-Policy Decision Making](#)

⁴ [Understanding California's Oil and Gas Safety Zones: Senate Bill 1137](#)

⁵ [Bill Text - AB-1866 Oil and gas: idle wells.](#)

⁶ [Bill Text - AB-3233 Oil and gas: operations: restrictions: local authority.](#)

⁷ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/173460.pdf>

related laws, the Department of Public Health (DPH) noted the limited local oversight over complex state and federal regulations requiring routine inspections, maintenance, and testing for oil and gas facilities. This report also noted the lack of access to information about onsite operations, potential hazards, and public notification procedures in the event of an emergency. The exception to this baseline has been for oil wells regulated by the Baldwin Hills Community Standards District, which was established in 2008 to implement stricter regulations, safeguards, and controls for oil and gas production activities at the Inglewood Oil Field following a series of gas release and odor events in the Baldwin Hills area. Nonetheless, residents near the Inglewood Oil Field, which are largely communities of color, continue to express serious concern about odors, noise, fire threats, and the impacts of spills, the most recent of which occurred in July 2024.

Communities living near oil and gas developments deserve to receive information promptly about potential threats to their health. This is underscored by notification requirements put in place by SB 1137 for maintenance work occurring in health protection zones. DPH's report also recommends that operators maintain a Community Health and Safety Plan, which would include valuable information that informs community members of actions taken to protect them from possible hazards, whom to contact during an emergency, step by step emergency procedures, and options available for receiving updates and new information. The operators can easily share this information on a website and provide it directly to the surrounding residences. While the County has made significant progress, additional safeguards at drill sites are necessary to ensure comprehensive protection for our communities and more accountability from oil operators.

This moment also provides an opportunity to assess the needs and next steps in the County's long-term just transition strategy—one that includes workers and communities historically impacted by fossil fuel extraction in planning a clean energy-based economy. The recently announced closure of the Phillips 66 refinery, along with the County's response underscores the need for a coordinated effort among regional workforce partners to support displaced workers.

In 2022, the Chief Sustainability Office collaborated with cross-sector members of the Just Transition Task Force to develop and release the Los Angeles County-City Just Transition Strategy, which provides recommendations to ensure a just transition for workers and communities impacted by the proposed phase-out of oil drilling and extraction activities. The report identifies three long-term priority areas: support for

workers, site remediation and reuse, and finance and coordination. Within each priority area, the report identified recommendations informed by Task Force members which was based in research and best practices. Some of these recommendations are applicable to rapid response efforts, such as supporting displaced workers from the Phillips 66 Refinery, while others could be expanded upon as the County and our region navigate future transitions in the fossil fuel industry.

Despite significant challenges, now is the time to double down in our commitment to advance long-term climate and environmental justice solutions. As climate disasters become more frequent and severe—bringing record-breaking heatwaves, intensifying wildfires, and worsening air quality—the need for urgent action has never been clearer. At the same time, uncertainty at the federal level threatens to stall critical progress made by our State and County. With frontline communities facing the greatest risks, local and State leadership must act boldly to protect public health, address the climate crisis, and advance environmental justice for current and future generations.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH), in coordination with the Directors of the Departments of Regional Planning (DRP), Public Works (DPW) via the Office of Oil and Gas, and Fire, in consultation with the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) and County Counsel, to take the following actions:
 - a. Report back to the Board in writing in 90 days with updated recommendations for implementing local regulations that strengthen health and safety protections and public notification requirements, with a focus on gaps in existing regulations;
 - b. Report back to the Board in writing in 90 days with any supplementary staffing or resource needs, and cost-recovery recommendations, including those identified in the Oil and Gas Strike Team's reports, to support the start-up costs and long-term capacity for any local enforcement efforts.
2. Direct the Director of DRP, in coordination with the Directors of DPH, DPW via the Office of Oil and Gas, and Fire, in consultation with the CSO and County Counsel to report back to the Board in writing in 120 days with policy recommendations to guide remediation and reuse of former oil sites in a

- manner that ensures timely clean up, operator accountability, appropriate health and safety standards, and enforcement mechanisms, in alignment with existing State law that requires operators to pay for plugging and abandonment. These recommendations should be informed by robust stakeholder input.
3. Direct the Director of DPW via the Office of Oil and Gas to report back to the Board annually with an analysis of Senate Bill 1137 and Assembly Bill 1866 compliance data, including rework permits and idle well management plans for oil wells in unincorporated Los Angeles County (County) and status of oil wells identified as high risk by the Oil and Gas Strike Team.
 4. Direct the CSO, in coordination with the Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), to engage with Just Transition Task Force members, the City of Los Angeles, relevant County Departments, including but not limited to the DRP, DPH, and Parks and Recreation, and external expert advisors, including partners in philanthropy, regional workforce and clean technology entities, and frontline communities, and report back to the Board in writing in 180 days with the following:
 - a. Recommendations for any changes in scope or structure of the Just Transition Task Force, including strategic partnerships, to ensure it meets the long-term goals of developing a strategy for a just transition away from fossil fuels towards a clean energy economy in the County that prioritizes equity, economic opportunity, and community resilience, fully represents the diverse stakeholder perspectives necessary, and positions the County as a leader in the field;
 - b. Identification of priority implementation steps, associated timelines, projected resource requirements, and County Department leads, including: programs and supports designed specifically for communities negatively impacted by the fossil fuel industry; initial pilot projects for site remediation; and case studies for worker support programs. In order to identify priority implementation steps, pilot projects and recommendations, the CSO and Director of DEO shall:
 - i. Conduct a labor market assessment identifying impacted job classifications, geographic concentrations, and transferable skills;

- ii. Develop a list of targeted career pathways and current workforce development training programs for comparable clean energy, manufacturing, environmental remediation, construction, and infrastructure jobs;
 - iii. Collaborate and partner with labor unions, workforce boards, and educational institutions to engage them in the Just Transition Task Force and develop re-skilling and credentialing programs for affected workers;
 - iv. Develop a plan to leverage local, State, Federal and non-governmental funding streams to support wage replacement, training, and wraparound services for affected workers;
 - v. Based on the analysis, engagement and gaps outlined above, recommend a new high road training partnership program to transition workers in the private sector fossil fuel industry into civil service positions including County civil service positions, or other high-road, family-sustaining career opportunities;
 - vi. Recommend metrics to evaluate success, including the number of workers transitioned into new jobs, wage levels, and job retention over time after participating in a County affiliated workforce program relative to the Just Transition; and
 - vii. Identify criteria to assess potential sites for remediation and recommend initial pilot sites for remediation.
5. Delegate authority to the CSO and Director of DEO, within existing resources, not to exceed \$300,000, to execute an agreement and amendments with one or more consultants as needed, waiving the County's competitive procurement requirements to support the new scope of the re-constituted Just Transition Task Force and perform labor market analyses as needed. Any consultant agreements or amendments must be approved as to form by County Counsel.
6. Direct the Director of the Internal Services Department, in collaboration with County Counsel, the CSO, and Director of DEO, to report back to the Board in writing in 90 days with recommendations for updates to the County's procurement policies that prioritize contracting with entities who agree to hire from the County's pool of pre-screened and job-ready workforce training

programs identified under Directive 4 above, and who are using clean and green technology to perform their contracted work with the County. The recommendations should include:

- a. A proposed scoring incentive or preference points for vendors demonstrating a clear plan or progress toward transitioning away from fossil fuels and adopting clean energy practices;
- b. Inclusion of criteria in County solicitations that reward companies aligned with the County's sustainability, climate, air quality, and equity goals;
- c. A strategy for engaging and supporting certified small businesses and those businesses who may be historically underrepresented in the clean energy transition;
- d. Proposed pilot contracts and departments where a preference point system could be used in procurement to incentivize jobs with a focus on high impact sectors and job classifications.

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