



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Protect Baldwin Hills Parkland & Community Health  
1,000 New Oil Wells Proposed  
Public Hearing • Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup> • 6pm  
*Consolidated Realty • 3725 Don Felipe Drive • Los Angeles 90008*  
*(off Stocker, just west of Crenshaw)***

**Residents Ask County to Protect the Environment & Community Health**  
*Overflow Attendance at First Hearing; Second Hearing Scheduled for August 14<sup>th</sup>*

**LOS ANGELES, CA** — More than 400 community residents packed the County's first public hearing to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Report that analyzes potential new zoning regulations for the Baldwin Hills Oil Field, but less than a dozen were given the opportunity to provide testimony. The remainder were told they would need to come back to a second hearing if they wanted to voice their concerns about the EIR or the proposed new zoning regulations.

“The community’s years of concern and anxiety about the safety of the oil field were essentially ignored when several dozen community residents were not given the opportunity to address the LA County Planning Commission at the first hearing on August 2<sup>nd</sup>,” says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, Executive Director of Community Health Councils, a member of the Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance that formed to provide a forum for residents to review the draft report and develop appropriate remedies. “We were cheated by a lack of due process and irrelevant testimony by employees and individuals receiving royalty checks from the oil field operator.”

Surrounded by the neighborhoods of Baldwin Hills, Baldwin Vista, Culver City, Crenshaw, Leimert Park, Ladera Heights, Inglewood, View Park and Windsor Hills, the two-square-mile

Baldwin Hills Oil Field is the last large-scale undeveloped open space in South and West Los Angeles. The Oil Field has operated since 1924 without community oversight or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to assess its impact on community health and safety. The oil field operator, Plains Exploration and Production Company (PXP), has proposed to expand operations and drill 1,000 new wells over 20 years where currently only 435 wells are actively producing.

In recent years, many residents in the vicinity of the oil field have reported noise, odor, vibration, health, safety and visual impacts from the operation in the oil field. In January 2006, there was an unusually large release of gas from an oil well drilling operation that resulted in at least 60 calls to emergency services and the Air Quality Management District.

Many residents were forced to evacuate their homes in the middle of the night. Culver Crest resident John Kuechle's wife became so nauseous that they left their home at 3 am, drove several miles away, and spent the rest of the night dozing in their mini-van. John Kuechle recalls, "As unpleasant as those few hours were, we were even more worried about the potential long-term health implications of being exposed to unknown substances. While we initially took comfort from PXP's assurances that the release was 'non-hazardous,' we later read—in the AQMD's report on the incident—that PXP employees had described the release as including 'an unknown amount' of dangerous hydrogen sulfide."

When oil production began in the Oil Field, livestock grazing was the predominant economic use of the land. Now over a million residents live within a five-mile radius of the Oil Field, including several elementary and pre-schools, West LA Community College and Kenneth Hahn State Park.

*Community Health Councils is a non-profit, community-based health promotion, advocacy and policy organization. Established in 1992, CHC's mission is to improve health and increase access to quality healthcare for uninsured, economically-disadvantaged, and underserved populations.*

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