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Supervisor Burke Fails Community *Proposed Zoning for Oil Field Lacks Adequate Protections*

The Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance, a collaboration of neighborhood associations and block clubs representing over 50,000 households, is disappointed that Supervisor Burke has once again failed to stand up for the community she was sworn to represent and serve. Burke had been conspicuously absent in the six previous public hearings held by the County Planning Commission and refused to give any indication of what amendments she would offer to the fourth and final rewrite of the proposed zoning ordinance until moments before the board vote. The three busloads of community members who sat through seven hours of today's Board meeting left angry, dissatisfied and ignored by the supervisor who has now added the Baldwin Hills Oil Field along with Martin Luther King Hospital to a long list of betrayal and neglect by the supervisor. Many agreed the community would have fared better had Supervisor Burke been absent. In a last minute disclosure, Burke crafted a motion amending the draft ordinance that went so far as to undercut some of the environmental and health mitigation measures recommended in the Environment Impact Study. Adding insult to injury, Supervisor Burke gave the oil field operator, PXP, approval to drill 53 wells a year, although PXP had originally asked for only 15-20 new wells. The Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance is considering its options as Supervisor Burke steps over and turns her back on her community as she exits as supervisor.

The Board of Supervisors placed moratorium on new drilling, deepening and redrilling of oil wells in Baldwin Hills starting on June 27, 2006 and later extended this for another year to provide time for the county to complete an environmental impact report and new zoning ordinance. Instead the county, under Burke's leadership, squandered the first year: It was not until June 28, 2007 that the notice for preparation that triggers the EIR study was released. Not wanting to pay for the study and invest in the community's health, the county had PXP put up the money and apply for the Community Standards District ordinance. Not only did the oil operator apply for the CSD—they were asked to draft the ordinance which would essentially regulate their operation—it was their proposed ordinance/regulations that became the basis of the EIR study. PXP didn't submit its draft of

the CSD until February 2008, thereby delaying the release of the draft EIR, which came out just two weeks before the end of the moratorium (June 29, 2008). Why did Burke allow this delay to occur and then turn to the community and board and say, “if you don’t approve the CSD by October 21st the gentlemen’s agreement with PXP to extend the conditions of the moratorium (they wouldn’t sign a formal agreement) would expire and PXP could start drilling.” To add insult to injury , the county didn’t release their draft of the CSD until August 14, five days before the end of the public comment period. So the EIR didn’t even study the county’s version of the proposed ordinance.

A naive community was once again set up for failure and disappointment. The delay in the completion of the EIR study and drafting of the CSD the allowed the supervisor to say, as she has done on so many issues facing South LA, “if you don’t agree with what is being offered, you get nothing.” When did anything become better than nothing? The community alliance argues the state would not issue drilling permits to PXP, at least not in less time than the additional 30 days requested to respond to their concerns. Instead the three other board members fell back to their old inside agreement, “if you don’t tell me what to do with my community, I won’t tell you to do in yours—divide by 5 standard procedure—and went along under the assumption that they had no other choice. It appeared that the other supervisors hadn’t taken the time to study the issue or documents, much less get clarification from the state, so South LA gets pushed to the back of the bus again. -