



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Janice Taylor  
[janice@chc-inc.org](mailto:janice@chc-inc.org) 323.295.9372 x 221; 323.630.4247 (cell)

## **Residents Rally Against County's Failure to Address Their Concerns** *Proposed Zoning for Oil Field Lacks Adequate Protections*

**LOS ANGELES, CA** — After three public hearings, hours of testimony and volumes of written comments, residents surrounding the Baldwin Hills Oil Field were shocked to learn on September 5<sup>th</sup> that the revised draft Community Standards District (CSD) to regulate drilling in the 1,000 acre field for the next twenty years incorporated few of their recommendations. Over 400 residents had packed the County's first three public hearings to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Report that analyzes potential new zoning regulations for the Baldwin Hills Oil Field. The Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance, a coalition of area neighborhood associations, submitted its own 37-page Community Standards District for the Field and more than 35 pages of comments on the Environmental Impact Report. Yet the County completely ignored the community's concerns and recommendations. Just five days after the release of the County's revised draft of the CSD, more than 50 residents and members of the Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance boarded a bus to downtown to attend what was to be the final Regional Planning Commission hearing and protest the County's failure to seriously consider their concerns about the environmental and health issues surrounding oil drilling in the Baldwin Hills.

"PXP, the field operator, claimed that the Oil Field has been safe and productive for 85 years," says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, Executive Director of Community Health Councils, a member of the Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance that provides the forum where residents reviewed the draft report and developed remedies. "They forgot the failure of the Baldwin Hills reservoir in 1963 that took 5 lives and destroyed 277 homes as a result of subsidence caused by exploitation of the oil field and the more than 60 Culver City residents who had to flee their homes due to the release of potentially harmful gases during drilling in 2006. What else have they forgotten?" Residents and members of the Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance were joined by a number of elected officials and local and state regulatory agencies in asking the County to provide more time for review of the zoning ordinance.

In an unexpected move, the LA County Regional Planning Commission responded to the community's outcry at Wednesday's meeting by passing a unanimous motion to extend the vote on the

draft zoning ordinance to October 1<sup>st</sup>. The motion directed the County Planning Department to meet with representatives from the Alliance before preparing a revised CSD. The Chair of the Commission went on to enumerate a number of issues raised by the Alliance and asked the staff to address them: the consolidation of wells; reinvestment into the community and health services; potential repair and replacement for damaged property due to uplift and subsidence; prevention of explosions within the community such as at the Ross Store in 1968; and the need for an exit strategy and plan for the next best-use of the land when it is no longer financially advantageous to drill or produce natural gas. The revised CSD will be available to the public for review on or before September 24, 2008 followed by a public hearing on this matter on October 1, 2008 before going to the Board of Supervisors.

“There are many ‘big picture’ concepts that were not considered in the draft zoning regulations released last week,” says Ken Kutcher, resident and GBHA member. “There needs to be a cap on the total number of new wells that can be drilled over the next 20 years and an annual limit on the number of new wells drilled. In 2006, PXP drilled 49 new wells, subjecting neighbors to drilling 320 out of 365 days that year alone. New drilling without periodic review of the County's standards, monitoring, oversight and enforcement would create unacceptable health and safety risks.”

Another key concern of the Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance was that the draft proposed by the County didn't include significant penalties if PXP failed to comply with the terms of the zoning regulations. The CSD must include a set of penalties that will be meaningful to PXP and should provide an escalation of the amounts if violations occur more frequently than once a year.

“The County needs to prepare an ordinance that will fully protect its residents,” continues John Kuechle, another resident and GBHA member. “We urge the County to read the comments submitted by the Alliance and produce regulations we can rally behind.”

The next public hearing will take place on **Wednesday, October 1 at 9am** at the County Commission Planning Hearing Room, 320 West Temple Street, LA 90012. The Greater Baldwin Hills Alliance will again be organizing a bus to take residents who would like to show their support or testify at the hearing. Anyone who would like more information should contact Bethany at 323.295.9372. Updates on the future of the Baldwin Hills Oil Field can also be found on the Community Health Councils website at [www.chc-inc.org](http://www.chc-inc.org).

*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.*