



# **TERRA LAWSON-REMER**

## **VICE-CHAIR**

**SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

### **AGENDA ITEM**

**DATE:** September 10, 2024

**19**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

#### **SUBJECT**

**PROTECTING SAN DIEGANS FROM THE IMPACTS OF THE BIG OIL INDUSTRY  
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

#### **OVERVIEW**

For decades, oil and gas companies have known about the dangers and repercussions that burning fossil fuels would have, and yet they proceeded to engage in misleading information and advertising campaigns, and protect their profit over people. This has resulted in climate change harms across the State of California. Billions of dollars have already been spent by the State to recover from damages, and to support mitigation and adaptation measures.

Fossil fuels are by far the largest contributor to global greenhouse gasses at over 75% and can also be attributed for nearly 90% of carbon emissions according to the United Nations (UN). As greenhouse gas concentrations rise, so too does global surface temperatures which have been shown to cause more severe storms, increase drought and wildfire risk, warm our oceans, cause sea levels to rise, disrupt food supplies, and impact health. California has been hit hard by many of these issues.

Locally, in San Diego County, we have witnessed these harms in real time. There have been historic droughts, flooding, and exacerbated wildfires, as well as increased heat, air pollution, and damage to natural resources in our communities. Some of our residents have experienced the worst repercussions of this, with displacement, loss of homes, and livelihoods.

**SUBJECT:** PROTECTING SAN DIEGANS FROM THE IMPACTS OF THE BIG OIL INDUSTRY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Attorney General Rob Bonta has filed a lawsuit entitled “*People of California v. Exxon Mobil Corporation, et al.*,”<sup>1</sup> which aims to hold major oil companies and their trade association accountable for their decades of deception, and the harms done to Californians. It is imperative that the County support any effort that aims to hold these companies responsible for their deception and related climate harms. The item today requests that the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution in support of Attorney General Rob Bonta’s efforts.<sup>2</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**VICE-CHAIR TERRA LAWSON-REMER**

Adopt a resolution entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN SUPPORT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ROB BONTA’S EFFORTS TO HOLD BIG OIL COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

All communities have a right to live, work, and play in healthy, clean, and safe environments. Impacts of climate change related to the deception of the big oil companies and their trade association have disproportionately affected those who have historically experienced injustices and inequities. The County is dedicated to ensuring that we protect public health, create equitable and sustainable solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate harm, and invest in our communities so that they have the resources they need.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

This board letter aligns with the County’s sustainability goals to protect the environment by holding big oil companies accountable for the climate harm that their deception has caused the State of California and locally in San Diego.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this recommendation. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

For decades, oil and gas companies have known about the dangers and repercussions that burning fossil fuels would have, and yet they proceeded to engage in misleading information and advertising campaigns, and protect their profit over people. This has resulted in climate change harms across the State of California. There have been frequent and longer heat waves, drought,

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of the First Amended Complaint in the case, *People of California v. Exxon Mobil Corporation, et al.* (2023), can be found at [https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/First%20Amended%20Complaint\\_Final%206.7.24%20rev.%202%29\[3\].pdf](https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/First%20Amended%20Complaint_Final%206.7.24%20rev.%202%29[3].pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-files-amended-complaint-lawsuit-against-five-largest>

**SUBJECT: PROTECTING SAN DIEGANS FROM THE IMPACTS OF THE BIG OIL INDUSTRY (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

more extreme wildfires, sea level rise, flooding, and impacts to habitats and natural lands. Billions of dollars have already been spent by the State to recover from damages, and to support mitigation and adaptation measures due to this deception.

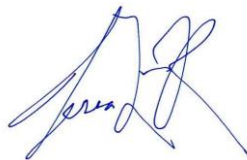
San Diego County is no stranger to many of these impacts. As sea-levels rise, it has become a pressing problem for coastal communities, as there has been coastal erosion and bluff collapse at locations such as Blacks Beach, San Elijo State Beach, and Beacon's Beach. There have also been increased wildfire threats, longer wildfire seasons, heat waves, air pollution, drought, and extreme weather patterns. Most recently, in January of 2024, San Diego saw atmospheric rivers that brought more intense rainfall than it had seen in decades. In the period of eight hours, there was a record breaking 2.73 inches recorded at San Diego Lindbergh Field, which surpassed the 1.57 inches record set in 1963, making it the wettest January date on record for San Diego since 1850. In certain areas of San Diego, the rainfall was even heavier, causing massive impacts to residents' homes, and livelihoods.

It is imperative that the County support any effort that aims to hold these companies responsible for their deception and related climate harms. The item today requests that the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution in support of Attorney General Rob Bonta's efforts to hold big oil companies accountable.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed action to adopt a resolution in support of the Attorney General's efforts to hold big oil companies accountable relate to the County of San Diego's Sustainability, Equity, and Community 2024-2029 Strategic Plan Initiatives, by actively combating climate impacts, reducing health disparities, and protecting the safety of our communities.

Respectfully submitted,



TERRA LAWSON-REMER  
Supervisor, Third District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**ATTACHMENT A: A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN SUPPORT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ROB BONTA'S EFFORTS TO HOLD BIG OIL COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE**