



July 29, 2020

Mayor Robert Garcia and Council Members
Long Beach City Council
City of Long Beach
411 W Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: File item #20-0687: Oil Barrel Production Tax

Dear Mayor Garcia and Members of the Long Beach City Council,

The Coalition for Clean Air (CCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed oil barrel production tax increase. The demand to confront and uproot systemic racism is undeniable and must be heeded. One of the most significant injustices Long Beach residents face is environmental injustice. This is especially true for residents of the western, central, and northern portions of the city. It is also important to note that oil drilling, refining and use is the root cause for many of these injustices.

For more than a century, Long Beach has been impacted by oil drilling and refining. Though the city's oil resources have diminished over the years, pipelines, storage facilities, ocean-going tanker vessels and thousands of active, idle, and abandoned wells pollute the community. Emissions from oil and gas operations, which are mainly volatile organic compounds (VOCs)¹, not only help form smog but also have health impacts such as respiratory distress, organ damage, mental impairment and cancer.² Further, the City of Long Beach is situated next to three large oil refineries located in Wilmington and Carson. The confluence of oil drilling, production, refining, and transportation makes the oil industry one of the leading facility-based sources of particulate matter and VOCs in the region.³

In addition to the oil industry, Long Beach has other major air quality challenges. The city is home to the busiest seaport complex in the United States. While the ports are a major part of the city's economy and provide gainful employment for many of Long Beach's residents, they are

¹ SCAQMD, *Community Emissions Reduction Plan: Wilmington, Carson and West Long Beach*, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/wilmington/cerp/final-cerp-wcwl.pdf?sfvrsn=8>, pg. 5e-2 (accessed June 24, 2020.)

² United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Volatile Organic Compounds' Impact on Indoor Air Quality* <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/volatile-organic-compounds-impact-indoor-air-quality> (accessed June 24, 2020.)

³ SCAQMD, *Community Emissions Reduction Plan: Wilmington, Carson and West Long Beach*, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/wilmington/cerp/final-cerp-wcwl.pdf?sfvrsn=8>, pg. 3b-6 (accessed June 24, 2020.)

also the largest sources of pollution in the region. Port operations, drayage trucks, locomotives and other activities emit smog-forming and toxic air pollutants into the local community, as well as climate-damaging greenhouse gases. According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the primary toxic air contaminant affecting West Long Beach is diesel particulate matter,⁴ which is comprised of more than 40 cancer causing substances. SCAQMD's Multiple Air Toxic Exposure Study (MATES) shows relative cancer risk in Long Beach is highest near the ports and railyards, as well as in proximity to Interstate 710 and Route 91.⁵

The oil and gas and goods movement industries represent just a portion of Long Beach's air quality challenges. And air quality is just one of the many environmental challenges facing the city, which must also contend with the Los Angeles River, the breakwater, historic land use decisions and urban planning, as well as the growing climate emergency. What must not be forgotten is low-income communities and communities of color bear a disproportionate impact from pollution and climate disruption, both in terms of exposure^{6, 7} and effects.⁸ Examining the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's (OEHHA) CalEnviroscreen 3.0 tool reveals that Long Beach's most polluted areas overlap with its communities of color and low-income communities.⁹

We appreciate the City Council having this conversation and considering how to use the city's oil production tax revenues to begin the hard work of correcting environmental injustice. If Long Beach is to be successful in this work, the city must commit to sustained investment, empowerment, and transformation of its most environmentally burdened neighborhoods. To this end, we recommend the city consider the following policies and practices when deciding how to use the potential revenue:

- Specify a required minimum percentage of revenues to be spent directly within the city's disadvantaged and low-income communities. This reflects the SB 535 (de León, 2012) and AB 1550 (Gomez, 2016) requirements governing over California's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund revenues.¹⁰ This requirement, however, should be treated as a policy

⁴ SCAQMD, *Community Emissions Reduction Plan: Wilmington, Carson and West Long Beach*, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/wilmington/ceqp/final-cep-wcwlb.pdf?sfvrsn=8>, pg. 3a-9 (accessed June 24, 2020.)

⁵ SCAQMD, *MATES IV Interactive Map*, <https://scaqmd-online.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=470c30bc6daf4ef6a43f0082973ff45f> (accessed June 24, 2020.)

⁶ Boyd-Barrett, Claudia, California Health Report, *People of Color and the Poor Disproportionately Exposed to Air Pollution, Study Finds*, <https://www.calhealthreport.org/2019/02/08/people-of-color-and-the-poor-disproportionately-exposed-to-air-pollution-study-finds/>, February 8, 2019 (accessed June 25, 2020.)

⁷ American Lung Association, *Disparities in the Impact of Air Pollution*, <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/outdoors/who-is-at-risk/disparities> (accessed June 25, 2020.)

⁸ Poon, Linda, Bloomberg, *Housing Discrimination Made Summers Even Hotter*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-01-22/the-link-between-redlining-and-extreme-urban-heat>, January 22, 2020 (accessed June 25, 2020.)

⁹ OEHHA, *CalEnviroscreen 3.0 Map*, <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30> (accessed June 25, 2020.)

¹⁰ California Air Resources Board, *California Climate Investments: Priority Populations*, <http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/priority-populations> (accessed July 7, 2020.)

floor rather than a ceiling, and the city should exceed any minimum investment requirement

- Work directly with the most impacted communities to develop collaborative solutions that have support from residents and other stakeholders through successful models such as, but not limited to, Participatory Budgeting
- Create grant programs to provide technical, outreach, programmatic and capacity support for nonprofit and community-based organizations seeking to organize, educate, or provide direct services to Long Beach's residents, particularly those living in disadvantaged and low-income communities
- Fund local projects that complement the AB 617 process being implemented by SCAQMD, which includes a localized Community Emissions Reduction and Monitoring Plans for West Long Beach, Carson, and Wilmington
- Maximize the effectiveness of the city's investments by requiring funded projects demonstrate climate, air quality, and public health benefits (as appropriate), and require funded projects to avoid potential harms to the community
- Support the aggressive deployment of zero-emissions transportation infrastructure for both light- and heavy-duty vehicles, as well as zero-emissions public transportation
- Support equity-focused active transportation and shared mobility projects and related infrastructure
- Create and maintain buffer zones and mitigation measures between pollution sources and residential areas and other sensitive receptors
- Help fund and support parks, green space, urban forestry, and urban farming projects in park-poor neighborhoods, as well as create safe active transportation routes to schools and other public spaces

Lastly, we urge the city to be consistent in its policies when addressing environmental injustices. While the desire to invest in disadvantaged communities is commendable, these communities will still be impacted by the pollution sources surrounding them. To truly rectify longstanding environmental injustices, the city must commit to reducing emissions at the source. Long Beach can take meaningful actions now that will yield real emissions reductions. These actions include:

- Opposing any Interstate 710 development project that fails to create zero-emissions truck lanes, protect residents from displacement, and hire local workers

- Incentivize the turnover of diesel-powered heavy-duty vehicles by instituting a higher port truck rate while protecting drivers from wage theft and employment misclassification
- Support near-term deployment of zero and near-zero emission heavy-duty trucks and shipping terminal equipment to maximize public health benefits and comply with state and federal air quality mandates
- Create and implement land use policies that will prevent and, over time, correct environmental injustices

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



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