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California Voters Win Ban on Fracking in San Benito

Santa Barbara Residents Vow Commitment to Stop Dangerous Fracking Practices

OAKLAND, Calif. – Despite millions of dollars spent by the oil industry, voters in San Benito County today approved a local initiative to halt fracking and other extreme oil extraction methods and voters in Mendocino County appeared to have passed a similar measure.

With 100 percent of precincts reporting, 57 percent of voters in San Benito County and more than 67 percent of voters in Mendocino County approved Measures J and S joining a growing movement across the state by local communities seeking to protect air, water and the health of residents. Last year, Santa Cruz County approved a moratorium on fracking, while the Los Angeles City Council is considering a moratorium this year and residents in La Habra Heights have taken steps to place a fracking ban on the March ballot.

Santa Barbara County voters did not approve Measure P, which proposed a similar ban on fracking. Since July, the oil industry poured \$6.4 million into efforts in Santa Barbara County to defeat Measure P, compared to about \$300,000 in grassroots funding to support the ban – equivalent to a 21 to 1 difference. A coalition of local residents and supporters, including Assembly member Das Williams, has vowed to continue fighting to stop extreme oil extraction Santa Barbara County.

According to disclosures to the California Secretary of State's Office, campaigns to defeat Measure J in San Benito and Measure P in Santa Barbara were more expensive than any California congressional race this year. In just the last week, the oil industry injected another \$325,000 against the measure. In San Benito County, the oil industry spent about \$2 million against Measure J, compared to about \$140,000 by local residents – outspending them 13 to 1.

“Despite the oil industry’s aggressive efforts to spread misinformation, San Benito, Mendocino and Santa Barbara voters waged a historic effort to ban fracking in their communities and protect the health of their neighborhoods and the environment,” **said Adam Scow of Californians Against Fracking and Food & Water Watch.** “The defeat of Measure P in Santa Barbara does not diminish the reality that residents throughout California are standing up in growing numbers to protect their homes, schools and our state’s vulnerable water supplies. As more local communities launch efforts to ban extreme extraction and win at the polls, Gov. Brown should heed the calls for a statewide halt to fracking in California.”

Statement of Rebecca Claassen, Campaign Chair for Yes on P in Santa Barbara:

"Despite this result -- a direct outcome from record-setting oil money funding deceptive claims -- the hearts and minds of Santa Barbara County have been set on a new course, away from dangerous oil extraction and towards renewable energy. This campaign was the beginning of the fight – not the end. Tens of thousands of people have stood up and voted for our long-term interests in protecting our water, our air and our future against fracking, acidization and steam injection. Over a thousand volunteers knocked on doors and made phone calls, reinvigorating the strong environmental spirit of this

community. We are immensely proud of the true grassroots nature of this campaign, standing in stark contrast with the outside interest solely focused on profits.

We want to sincerely thank all of Measure P's supporters for their enthusiasm and tireless efforts in this great cause, a cause that will never waiver and only build from this campaign onward."

BACKGROUND:

Fracking uses huge volumes of water mixed with dangerous chemicals to blast open rock formations and release oil and gas. The controversial technique was used in at least 1,900 California oil and gas wells, endangering California's air, water, wildlife, public health and climate.

[Recent analysis by Californians Against Fracking found that the oil and gas industry uses more than 2 million gallons of water on average each day](#) in California for dangerous extraction techniques such as fracking, acidizing and cyclic steam injection.

This summer, [California officials ordered an emergency shutdown of oil and gas waste injection sites and a review of more than 100 others](#) in the Central Valley out of concerns that companies are pumping potentially hazardous wastewater into drinking water and irrigation aquifers. The state water board later confirmed that at least 9 wells were injecting harmful wastewater from the oil industry into protected aquifers.

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Californians Against Fracking is a coalition of about 200 environmental business, health, agriculture, labor, political and environmental justice organizations working to win a statewide ban on fracking in California. Follow @CAagainstFrack on Twitter.