

Fesmire, Mark, EMNRD

From: Patricia Waldygo [ursakita@swcp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 14, 2007 3:00 PM
To: Fesmire, Mark, EMNRD
Subject: Oil Drilling in Santa Fe County

November 14, 2007

Mark Fesmire, Director
Re: Oil Drilling in Santa Fe County

Dear Mr. Fesmire,

I attended the public meeting of the Oil Conservation Commission at Porter Hall Tuesday afternoon, November 13. Unfortunately, in that hearing, I was speechless from anger, nausea, and a feeling of being outnumbered in the midst of so many oil executives. If I'd been prepared, I would have countered with what I am about to say to you—but I'd gone to this hearing expecting that hundreds of Santa Fe residents would show up, as they had at the Chavez Center, and I figured I wouldn't have a chance to speak.

At yesterday's hearing, two local women spoke up in favor of instituting the closed-loop system to avoid the health problems caused by toxins leaking into the aquifers. And three small oil producers from Farmington voiced an objection to these safer standards because it would be too expensive to implement and would put them out of business. They detailed how much money their operations and workers contributed to the local economy.

The Farmington area, as was mentioned yesterday, has something like 300 times the rate of birth defects compared to Santa Fe County. The oil and gas industry always denies culpability, but when they use neurotoxins and cancer-causing chemicals like benzene, toluene, formaldehyde, ethylbenzene, and zylene, some of which are odorless and colorless, it doesn't take a smoking gun—only an educated guess—to figure out what is to blame for their local residents' illnesses.

If Tecton's wildcat exploration leads to Big Oil drilling on 65,000 acres from Cerrillos up to Nambe, our beautiful land will be destroyed, not to mention our health from cancer, emphysema, and other diseases. We must stop this insanity at the local level and deny Tecton's permit. Once our groundwater is contaminated, we have no federal protection. The 2005 Republican Congress ensured this, by rubber-stamping a Dick Cheney-authored law that exempts "frac'ing" from the Clean Water Act.

You cannot accurately compare Farmington's economy with Santa Fe's. Farmington's landscape has been ruined and "uglified" by the oil and gas industry, thus its revenue from tourism is negligible. Santa Fe, on the other hand, could consider tourism its most profitable business. Our world-class restaurants, hotels, art galleries, spas, cultural events, and magnificent scenery attract tourists from around the world. If we let oil drilling ravage our landscape, pollute our water, and make our fragrant air stink with chemicals, who will come here? It will be as ugly as West Texas or Farmington. The losses to this county's economy would greatly exceed anything the small oil producers in Farmington mentioned yesterday as their worst-case scenario if they went out of business.

I am totally against any oil drilling in Santa Fe County, but if it has to happen, the closed-loop system

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must be mandatory. Personally, from what I've read, the only communities that have been successful at keeping Big Oil out have been those with such strict safety requirements that the oil companies decided it wasn't cost-effective to drill.

Sincerely,
Patricia Waldygo
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cc: Daniel Sanchez, Enforcement and Compliance Manager

A similar letter was sent to the following, but with more information directed at the responsibilities of elected officials:

Harry Montoya
Virginia Vigil
Mike Anaya
Paul Campos
Jack Sullivan

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