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**Court Allows Environmentalists' Request to Intervene in Exxon Trucking Case
*Groups Defend County's Denial of Oil Trucking Plan in Santa Barbara County***

SANTA BARBARA, *Calif.*— A federal judge ruled today that conservation and Indigenous groups can help legally defend Santa Barbara County's denial of ExxonMobil's proposal to truck vast quantities of oil along dangerous California roads.

ExxonMobil is suing the County for rejecting the plan, which would have helped the company restart three Santa Barbara Channel oil platforms that have been shut down since the 2015 Refugio oil spill.

The Environmental Defense Center, Get Oil Out!, Santa Barbara County Action Network, Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, and Wishtoyo Foundation cited the trucking proposal's risks to public safety and environmental and cultural resources in their bid to join Santa Barbara County in defending the denial of the trucking proposal.

In March 2022 the Board of Supervisors rejected ExxonMobil's proposal to truck more than 460,000 gallons of oil every day for up to seven years. In May 2022 ExxonMobil filed a lawsuit attacking the County's denial in federal court in Los Angeles. Environmental groups sought to participate in the suit to help ensure that this dangerous project does not go forward, thereby preventing additional risks of more spilled oil, traffic accidents, and air pollution in our communities.

Today, the court granted the groups' request and recognized their significant interests in ensuring that the denial of ExxonMobil's project is upheld.

"Trucking is one of the most dangerous ways to transport oil. Recent oil tanker truck accidents prove how dangerous ExxonMobil's proposal to restart its offshore oil platforms and truck crude oil along scenic and perilous county highways is. Our research revealed that there have been eight serious accidents involving tanker trucks along ExxonMobil's proposed route since 2007, resulting in deaths, oil spills, injuries, fires, and road closures," said Linda Krop, Chief Counsel of the Environmental Defense Center, which represents the organization's members, Get Oil Out!, Santa Barbara County Action Network, Sierra Club, and Surfrider Foundation. "We are committed to ensuring that ExxonMobil's project does not go forward — in order to protect our health and safety of our communities, our climate, and our coastline."

"I'm outraged that Exxon has the nerve to sue Santa Barbara County for trying to protect people from oil trucks," said Julie Teel Simmonds, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. "The oil that

contaminated California's beaches in 2015 came from this company's offshore platforms, which operate in public waters. Our coast has already suffered so much from offshore drilling, and this dirty industry doesn't have the right to ramp up the risk by trucking huge quantities of oil down some of our most dangerous highways."

ExxonMobil's plan would have added up to 24,800 oil-filled truck trips a year on coastal Highway 101 and hazardous Route 166. ExxonMobil's three platforms off the coast of Santa Barbara were shut down in 2015 after the Plains All American Pipeline ruptured and spilled more than 450,000 gallons of heavy crude oil onto our beaches and into the Santa Barbara Channel, spreading all the way to Orange County. In 2020, Santa Barbara County planning staff recommended a prohibition on oil tanker trucks on Route 166 after a major accident spilled more than 4,500 gallons into the Cuyama River.

"Exxon's risky proposal to truck 460,000 gallons of oil per day along our coastline and a dangerous mountain highway is not just an accident waiting to happen but an accident that *will* happen. This is exactly why Get Oil Out! continues to oppose foolhardy projects like this one," stated Michael Lyons, President of Get Oil Out!. "As such, we are pleased that GOO! and its environmental partners are now intervenors in this important case," he added.

"The 2020 oil tanker spill on Route 166 threatened to pollute Twitchell Reservoir, which is the lifeblood of Santa Maria Valley's agricultural economy and the source of drinking water for 200,000 residents," said Ken Hough of the Santa Barbara County Action Network .

The County's rejection earlier this year of ExxonMobil's proposal was based on the project's significant and unavoidable harms to biological, water, and cultural resources in the event of a spill, as well as the project's other threats to public health, safety, and general welfare.

"Surfrider Foundation Santa Barbara Chapter has been working tirelessly for decades to protect the Gaviota Coast from inappropriate development and destruction at the hands of the oil industry. The history of oil industry damage in Santa Barbara goes all the way back to the infamous oil spill of 1969, which some people think of as a seminal moment in the development of the environmental movement," stated Ken Palley, Executive Committee Member of the Surfrider Santa Barbara Chapter. "We are delighted by this ruling as it is a step toward protection of our beautiful and irreplaceable coast from further catastrophic oil spills."

"ExxonMobil cannot be allowed to bully local governments and poison communities," said Katie Davis, Chair of Sierra Club's Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter. "The County followed the law in determining the risks of this project—which would restart aging offshore oil platforms, pump out carcinogenic air pollution from their coastal processing plant and send explosive oil trucks along dangerous roads—outweighed any possible benefits, even before considering the urgent need to get off of fossil fuels that are causing the climate crisis."

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Directed by @offline.media.account and @nicholas_weissman.