



### **NEWS RELEASE**

**August 28, 2014**

### **City to Petitioner: Fracking not Occurring**

The City of Santa Maria wants to correct inaccurate information that is circulating through an online petition to the City Council that seeks to ban fracking locally. The City has sent the petition organizer a written response. Also, it should be noted that this petition should not be confused with the current Measure P ballot measure that is slated for the November 2014 ballot.

Contrary to what this petition is asserting, the current Santa Maria City Council has not given specific authorization for fracking and other high intensity oil drilling methods in every park and open space within the City limits, as the petition alleges.

In April 2012, as part of the approval for the Area 9 Specific Plan (for 890 acres on the City's west side), the City Council approved development standards for oil exploration and production within several zone districts contained within the boundaries of that specific plan. No specific authorization was given for fracking there or in other open spaces of the City.

By way of background, extraction of natural resources has been allowed since at least the 1970s when the City signed an agreement with the County to contract the technical supervision and monitoring of any oil exploration and production. Also, while 43 years ago a prior City Council did authorize drilling in open spaces, it should be noted that any request to drill anywhere in the City would require a detailed analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and public notices, and discretionary approval through the Planning Commission. There are no active or idle petroleum wells anywhere within the City's parks, retention basins or greenbelts.

Nor are there any requests for exploration or production anywhere within the City. In addition, according to the State Department of Conservation's Division of Oil and Gas and Geothermal Resources – which oversees oil and gas development - fracking is not occurring anywhere within the greater Santa Maria Valley, nor has it for a number of years, as previous attempts were unsuccessful because of the specific strata in which our oil is contained in this region. Due to the geologic nature of our water basin, oil extraction occurs many thousands of feet below the bottom of the aquifer.

Questions may be directed to Larry Appel, Director of the Community Development Department, at 925-0951 ext. 244.

**Department:** Community Development  
**Contact Person:** Larry Appel, Director  
**Telephone Number:** (805) 925-0951 ext. 244  
**E-mail Address:** [lappel@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:lappel@cityofsantamaria.org)