



# Monterey County Planning Commission

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## Agenda Item No. 1

Legistar File Number: PC 18-008

January 31, 2018

**Introduced:** 1/22/2018

**Version:** 1

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Matter Type:** Planning Item

### **PLN160146 - Porter Estates Company Bradley Ranch LLC (Trio Petroleum)**

Public hearing (continued from December 13, 2017) to adoption a resolution denying the request for a Use Permit to allow temporary production testing for oil and gas at four (4) new well sites in the Hames Valley.

**Project Location:** Hames Valley, Bradley

**Proposed CEQA Action:** Find that the denial of the project is Statutorily Exempt pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(5) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15270(a).

#### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution (**Exhibit A**):

- 1) Finding that denial of the project is Statutorily Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(5) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15270(a); and
- 2) Denying the request for a Use Permit to allow temporary production testing for oil and gas at four (4) sites in the Hames Valley.

#### PROJECT INFORMATION:

**Agent:** Steven A. Rowlee, President

**Applicant:** Trio Petroleum

**Property Owner:** Porter Estates Company Bradley Ranch LLC

**APNs:** 424-081-046-000, 424-081-050-000, 424-111-001-000, 424-081-084-000

**Zoning:** F/40 and PG [Farming 40 acres per unit and Permanent Grazing]

**Plan Area:** South County Area Plan

**Flagged and Staked:** No

#### SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Mr. Steven A. Rowlee, representing Trio Petroleum, submitted an application for site preparation, drilling and production testing (exploration) for oil and gas at four new well sites in Hames Valley. The project is an exploratory effort to assist the applicant in determining whether oil is available in commercial quantities at the project location.

On December 13, 2017, the Planning Commission opened the public hearing, heard public testimony and passed a motion of intent to direct staff to return on January 31, 2018 with a resolution to deny the project based on the following reasons:

- The effects of oil exploration and production are injurious to the general welfare of the residents of Monterey County in terms of carbon emissions and groundwater contamination.
- Monterey County is an agricultural county and having clean air and water are very important to

the economy. Having a stable climate is extremely important to the agricultural basis of the County's economy. Having clean water is important not only for domestic consumption but for the entire economic engine of the County.

- Measure Z, which was passed by Monterey County voters in November 2016, enumerated findings that warned of the oil and gas industry's impacts on health and safety, groundwater, climate change, and the local economy.
- There are no counterbalancing benefits of the proposed project to offset these detrimental effects.

Staff has prepared a resolution (**Exhibit A**) with findings and evidence based on Planning Commission direction for consideration. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project. However, actions to deny a project are Statutorily Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(5) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15270(a).

Correspondences on the project received since the December 13, 2017 hearing are attached.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following agencies and departments have reviewed this project:

Environmental Health Bureau  
RMA-Environmental Services  
Monterey County Counsel

The proposed project was referred to the South County Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review on July 20, 2016. The LUAC voted 5-1-0-0 to recommend approval of the project. One member expressed concerns relative to approving petroleum projects instead of supporting renewable energy projects in the County.

Prepared by: Bob Schubert, Senior Planner x5183  
Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager  
Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director

The following attachments are on file with RMA:

Exhibit A - Draft Resolution  
Exhibit B - E-mail message dated December 21, 2017 from Steve Craig  
Exhibit C - Letter dated January 5, 2018 from Steven A. Rowlee

cc: Front Counter Copy; Cal Fire South County Fire Protection District; RMA-Public Works Department; RMA-Environmental Services; Environmental Health Bureau; Water Resources Agency; Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Manager; Steven Rowlee, Agent, Porter Estate Company Bradley Ranch LLC, Owner; Steve Craig, Citizen Planning Alliance; Mary Hsia-Coron, Protect Monterey County; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Amy White); John H. Farrow; Janet Brennan; Project File PLN160146