

# HUASNA FOUNDATION

Huasna Valley, California

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contact: Ron Skinner, President  
Huasna Foundation  
ron@huasnavalley.org  
805-473-3827

## County Staff Report Recommends Denial of Huasna Oil Project Planning Commission Hearing Set for February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Huasna Valley, CA – February 13, 2012: The San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission, on Thursday, February 23, 2012, will consider a request from Excelaron, L.L.C. for a Conditional Use Permit (DRC2009-00002) to establish oil wells and associated production facilities in the Huasna Valley. Last Friday, after almost four years of analysis, County Planning Staff released a report recommending denial of the project. The basis for staff's recommendation for denial includes five Class I environmental impacts to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Noise, and Land Use Incompatibility, plus a number of other impacts to the community that make this project a poor fit for the rural, agricultural community of the Huasna Valley.

“The Huasna Valley residents applaud the county Planning Staff's recommendation for denial of this project,” said Huasna Foundation President, Ron Skinner. “As stated in the final Environmental Impact Report, the environmentally superior alternative to this project is **no project.**”

The proposed project's plan for heavy oil truck traffic to use 7 miles of dirt roads subject to seasonal flooding in order to access highway 166 was deemed problematic. As a result, large truck traffic would invariably use Huasna Road resulting in unsafe road conditions. A very high fire hazard, lack of a source of freshwater for drilling operations and firefighting, dust, odors, noise, and a general degradation of the character of the rural, agricultural Huasna Valley were all cited as factors in the county staff's decision.

Huasna residents have expressed concern with the potential contamination of their limited groundwater supply from standard oil industry practices for extracting thick Monterey shale tar, such as horizontal drilling, large-volume hydrofluoric acidization, and hydraulic fracking, all practices that were “not proposed” by the applicant. “The underground activities of the oil industry are governed by the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) and not by local authority,” said Skinner, “Once the county permits a hole in the ground it is DOGGR that tells the oil company where they can steer their drill bit and what they can put down the hole. If Excelaron decided to frack Huasna, the county would be powerless to stop them.”

According to the staff report, Excelaron's project would employ up to four employees, but facility closures during periods of road flooding lasting up to 300 days per year means only part-time employment. Construction and trucking jobs would likely go to people from the existing oil industry infrastructure in Kern and Santa Barbara counties. Huasna Residents point out that tax revenue to the county from the proposed project would pale in comparison to property taxes collected from the 400+ residents in the greater Huasna Area that would be impacted by the project.

**To learn more about this project and its potential impacts and to view public comments made at a previous scoping meeting in February, visit the Huasna Foundation website: [www.huasnavalley.org](http://www.huasnavalley.org)**