

Introduction/Existing Violations

The Huasna Valley has a long history of productive agriculture and also a long history of failed oil prospecting ventures. The Huasna Basin has been well-explored for oil by both small and large oil companies over the years, including a thorough seismic sounding survey by Chevron in the late 1980's. The applicant claims that little is known about oil reserves in the field and that their project is exploratory in nature, yet there are a number of scientific journal papers summarizing the well-studied geology of the Huasna Basin and numerous well logs from previous prospecting on file with the Division of Oil and Gas. The EIR consultant should conduct a literature search for this historical information as well as examine all existing well logs for the area on file with Division of Oil and Gas.

Over the past century at least fifty-two prospect holes have been drilled in the Huasna Basin, only six of which produced small quantities of poor quality oil and large quantities of produced water for short periods of time. These wells were only able to produce oil through the use of diluents and steam injection, needed to thin out the thick tar that was found.

There are existing code violations on the proposed project site associated with the previously issued CUP, which must be removed prior to issuance of a new CUP pursuant to SLO County Land Use Ordinance 22.01.070. These existing code violations on the proposed project site may have resulted in the contamination of soils and groundwater with potentially hazardous materials and pose a threat to human safety.

Phase III - Site Cleanup and Existing Well Abandonment" must precede all other phases of this project. It is important that the EIR analyze this as an alternative to the project description as it has the potential to reduce environmental impacts from grading, drilling, construction, and testing of wells in an area of un-assessed and un-remediated contamination.

This Environmental Impact Report must hold Excelaron's proposed project to the highest standards in order to protect the environment of Huasna and its residents and agriculture, now and for the future.