

I am here to comment on the Williamson Act consistency review for the Excelaron/Mankins conditional use permit.

Table 2 of the rules of Procedure to Implement the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 states that petroleum extraction on contracted lands is subject to review and recommendation by the review committee. However, it also states that petroleum refining and related industries, vehicle and freight terminals, and electrical generating plants are not compatible uses on lands subject to land conservation contracts.

The main question here is does this facility go beyond the intention of the Williamson Act to allow petroleum extraction in a manner that does not affect the agricultural use of the contracted land?

It might be argued that a few oil derricks serviced by a pipeline operating in rangeland would not significantly affect the agricultural use of the land. We even see single derricks operating in vegetable croplands near Guadalupe. However these facilities do not rely on site-generated power, trucking facilities, or industrial water heating and processing facilities to extract oil, all of which are not compatible uses according to table 2.

In addition, you must consider AB 1492, which clearly states that any development on Williamson Act contracted land must be related to the primary use of the land for agricultural purposes. How is an industrial oil production facility related to the agricultural use of this property?

The Huasna-Lopez planning area has over 82,000 acres of AG land, with a large percentage of that land in Williamson Act contracts with the state. This is an area of active agriculture that would be negatively impacted by the presence of an industrial facility.

There is no Energy Extraction Combining Designation for the Huasna Area, despite past attempts to extract oil and the known presence of some low-grade tar. In fact the Mankins property in question has seen two past failed efforts to extract that tar - once in the 1960's and again in the 1980's. The property has since benefited by the reduction in property taxes afforded by its Williamson Act contract for its agricultural use - a contract that is not compatible with the development of an industrial oil production facility.