

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2022

Martha Guzman
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX
75 Hawthorne St. (ORA-1)
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Ms. Guzman,

We write to request that the EPA conduct a full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of Seneca Resources Corporation's application for an expansion of their oil drilling exemption in the Basal Sespe Zone Aquifer. We strongly support protections for the aquifer, and are concerned that an exemption expansion would threaten the nearby water supply and ecosystems.

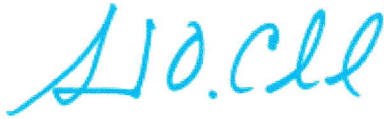
The Basal Sespe Zone Aquifer lies beneath the Los Padres National Forest and Sespe Creek in Ventura County. It is situated next to the Sespe Condor Sanctuary, where the California condor is making a tenuous recovery as an endangered species. The exemption boundary for the aquifer is also located only half a mile from the only source of water for the City of Fillmore's more than 16,000 residents –an area we understand was not part of the public review process. This is highly concerning, as evidence suggests that chemical and waste contaminants from oil drilling in the aquifer pose a real environmental danger to humans and wildlife alike.

According to a hydrogeological report included in the exemption documents, oil drilling in the aquifer poses two threats: first, seismic faults in the area act as a conduit between groundwater basins, providing means of contamination for the City of Fillmore's groundwater supply. Second, waste injection during oil drilling can cause earthquakes in oil fields, increasing the likelihood of an oil well rupture.

The aquifer is located in an area already suffering from a higher pollution burden than most Californians, according to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. The Sespe Creek is also protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These risks to the people of Ventura County and the environment are too great to go unexamined.

We ask for a full NEPA review of Seneca Resources Corporation's application for an expansion of their oil drilling exemption in the Basal Sespe Zone Aquifer with your full and fair consideration, consistent with all relevant rules and regulations.

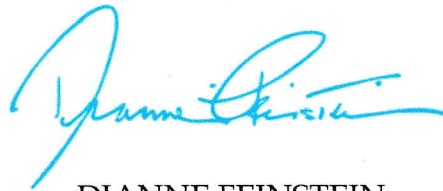
Sincerely,



SALUD O. CARBAJAL
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator



ALEX PADILLA
United States Senator