



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains

P.O. Box 4831
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ssmpa.com

June 25, 2015

Deputy Advisory Agency
c/o Mr. Nelson Rodriguez
Department of City Planning
City of Los Angeles
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard
Room 351
Van Nuys, California 91401

By email: marc.woersching@lacity.org nelson.rodriguez@lacity.org

Dear Mr. Woersching, Mr. Rodriguez and Los Angeles City Planning Advisory Agency Members:

Opposition to Hidden Creeks Estates Project, 12900 Browns Canyon Road, VTT-68724 / ENV-2005-6657-EIR

The **Santa Susana Mountain Park Association** respectfully urges you to deny the Tract Map for the Hidden Creeks Estates Project, VTT-68724, and urges you not to certify the project's Environmental Impact Report, ENV-2005-6657-EIR.

We, the Board Members of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association, oppose the 188-unit Hidden Creeks Estates Project, a proposed housing development in the Santa Susana Mountains, which would disturb the Browns and Mormon Canyon watersheds (Browns Canyon hydrologic Unit Code 180701050202), for the following reasons:

1. **Proximity to Major Gas and Oil Operations:** The proposed development site is adjacent to one of the nation's ten largest natural gas (methane) underground storage reservoirs, the Aliso Canyon Storage Facility (70-billion cubic feet) operated by Southern California Gas Company*. Termo Company also operates oil wells in the Aliso Canyon Field above the site. Odors, spills, and risks of accidents in the adjacent gas and oil infrastructure (low but potentially disastrous) make the Hidden Creeks Estates development proposal exceptionally dubious.
2. **Endangered Streams:** It is vital to native plants and animals in the greater Los Angeles region for us to protect, not damage, a riparian wetland with a year-round flowing blue-line stream. The proposed development impinges on both Browns Canyon and Mormon Canyon Creeks, premier watersheds that feed the Los Angeles River. Mayor Garcetti is leading the way in obtaining funding to restore the Los Angeles River. Protecting the streams that feed that river is obviously necessary.
3. **Rim of the Valley:** Disastrous effects would ensue from development, massive grading, and radical disturbance of native plants and habitat in nearby wilderness areas designated for protection in the "Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Study Act, HR1835." This study is being completed by the National Park Service, which recommends extending the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area protection into the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains.
4. **Seismic and Geologic Hazards:** It is a formidable risk to expose people and homes to a geologically and seismically hazardous landscape. Future costs to the city to cover potential disaster events could be excessive. The

proposed site for Hidden Creek Estates is unstable and landslides naturally occur. The Santa Susana Mountains are still uplifting, causing movement on the thrust faults. It is dangerously hazardous to build in this area.

5. **Wildfire Hazard:** The proposed site is in a designated historical wildfire corridor. The chaparral and hot-dry Santa Ana wind path along the ridges and foothills create a highly combustible area. Natural wildfires will occur, causing havoc for homeowners, domestic animals, and exorbitant cost for the city.
6. **Cultural Artifacts Endangered:** Archaeological and cultural artifacts are extant in this region and need to be protected.
7. **Habitat Loss:** The site of the proposed project is in the locale of one of the county's Significant Environmental Areas, SEA 23. The proposed development is an egregious destruction of habitat: ancient oaks, black walnut, sycamores, and other indigenous plant life that supports wildlife; mountain lions, bobcats, American badgers, coyotes, grey foxes, long-tailed weasels, raccoons, raptors such as Cooper's Hawk, Golden Eagle, California Condor and many amphibians and reptiles..
8. **Contradicts Infill Policy:** Los Angeles must look to vertical development along main arteries of public transportation, rail, bus, for future growth and preserve the natural beauty and remaining wildlife corridors, open space, mountains and foothills.

Sincerely,



Teena A. Takata
President, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association
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* Natural Gas Storage Operations and the Geology of the Aliso Canyon Field, Los Angeles Co., California;
http://archives.datapages.com/data/meta/pacific/data/101/101001/pdfs/75_firstpage.pdf

About Santa Susana Mountain Park Association:

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association is a 43 year-old non-profit organization based in Chatsworth, Los Angeles, California.

We represent approximately 700 members and concerned citizens, and we partner with many organizations to promote ecological and recreational quality in Southern California.

SSMPA's mission is to preserve and protect the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, and regional open space.

SSMPA Board of Directors:
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