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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF VENTURA

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March 24th, 2015

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Adoption of Board Policy Regarding Evaluation of Environmental Health Risk Studies

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the following Board of Supervisors Policy:

When the Board of Supervisors votes to have the County of Ventura review a specific study that identifies a possible environmental or public health risk in Ventura County, the County Executive Office will coordinate and prepare an evaluation of the study that addresses the following five issues:

1. The scientific validity of the study findings
2. Whether any violations of local or state laws are the likely cause of the study findings
3. Whether the study provides credible evidence of exceedances of applicable state or federal health risk standards
4. Whether the study indicates a significant public or environmental health risk for which no applicable standard exists
5. Whether any agency has authority to take action regarding any validated significant health risks, and whether there are any actions that an agency intends to take to address issues, health risks, or recommendations identified in the study.

DISCUSSION:

From time to time, studies from public agencies or private organizations indicate that an environmental health risk exists in Ventura County. Recent examples include a study indicating that ambient air in Upper Ojai contains carcinogens, a study indicating that storm waters convey carcinogenic substances to beaches on the north coast of Ventura County, and a study regarding fumigant usage on strawberry fields near Rio Mesa High School. Often, there is no single agency with the responsibility or authority to evaluate these studies

Within County government, there are multiple agencies that directly address environmental and public health risks, including the Resource Management Agency Environmental Health Division, the Health Care Agency Public Health Department, and the County Public Health Officer. Other County agencies may also have some aspect of authority in these matters, including the Planning Division, the Public Works Agency, the Watershed Protection District, and the Agricultural Commissioner. There are regional agencies with authority in some environmental health matters including the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and there are many State and federal agencies that address various environmental health risks.

So that our Board and the citizens of Ventura County can appropriately assess and address these reports and the risks they identify, we recommend that our Board adopt a policy to provide a coordinated review of such reports. Given the broad span of County, regional, state, and federal agency involvement in environmental health risks, it is appropriate that the County Executive Office coordinate and prepare the requested evaluation of environmental health risk studies.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett,



Linda Parks