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First Public Meeting Set for Environmental Impact Report For the Proposed Oil Production Project

July 24 Scoping Meeting to Provide Answers about Process and Seek Public Input

HERMOSA BEACH, CA – On July 24, the City of Hermosa Beach will host a Scoping Meeting, the first of several public meetings in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process for the oil production project proposed by E&B Natural Resources Management Corp. (E&B) at the City's Maintenance Yard. The Scoping Meeting is scheduled to take place from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Hermosa Beach Community Theater, 710 Pier Avenue, Hermosa Beach.

"We encourage everyone to attend the Scoping Meeting because it will offer them an opportunity to learn more about the EIR process and to provide input on any environmental matters they believe should be addressed in the EIR," said Mayor Patrick "Kit" Bobko. "The EIR is just one of several studies the City is conducting to provide the public with the information it needs to decide whether or not to approve oil drilling in Hermosa Beach."

E&B submitted an application to drill for oil from the City's Maintenance Yard in November, launching the EIR process that is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for projects of this magnitude. The City of Hermosa Beach is the lead agency for the environmental review.

At the Scoping Meeting, the City's EIR project manager, Ed Almanza, and the City's EIR consultant, Marine Research Specialists (MRS), will present an overview of the project and topics that require a detailed assessment in the EIR.

"The goal of this forum is not to debate pros and cons of the project, but to discuss the focus of the EIR's analysis of potential environmental impacts," said Almanza. "We'll be happy to answer questions about the environmental review process at the Scoping Meeting. In the coming months, we'll also be available to meet informally with residents to discuss how the EIR will address various issues."

The Scoping Meeting is part of the 30-day period, spanning from July 11 to August 12, during which the City will receive input from the public and from other governmental agencies in writing or in person about what environmental issues should be studied in the EIR. The City has sent postcards to every residence in Hermosa Beach to notify the public about the Scoping Meeting and the opportunity to comment on the topics to be assessed in the EIR.

Based on the input received, the EIR consultant, under City direction, will prepare a Draft EIR. The purpose of the Draft EIR is to fully examine and disclose the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and identify "mitigation measures" to reduce and/or avoid significant impacts.

The Draft EIR will be made available to the public through several means, including the city's website. The City will accept comments regarding the Draft EIR during the public comment period required under CEQA. In addition, public hearings with the Hermosa Beach Planning Commission and City Council will provide additional opportunities for public comment.

Comments received on the Draft EIR will be reviewed and addressed in the Final EIR. The Final EIR will be a document consisting of the Draft EIR and the "Responses to Comments," as well as any additional technical reports or follow-up that may be necessary. The Hermosa Beach Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Final EIR and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Final EIR.

The City Council will hold its own public hearing on the Final EIR and make its own determination on certification of the Final EIR. Once the Final EIR is certified, the matter will be placed on the ballot, and Hermosa Beach voters will decide whether or not they wish to repeal the City's current ban on oil drilling and whether or not to allow E&B's proposed oil production project. The vote is expected in the fall of 2014.

"Because the EIR is limited to environmental issues, the City also is conducting additional studies to evaluate any potential impacts on the community's health and the costs and benefits of either approving or disapproving the proposed project," said Mayor Bobko. "These studies will be completed before the election and are part of the City's commitment to serve as the provider of facts about the proposed project. Our goal is to provide the information Hermosa Beach voters need to make their own decisions about the proposed oil production project."

For more information about the project, the EIR and the health impact and cost/benefit studies, or to get more information about submitting comments, please visit the Proposed Oil Production Project page on the city's website: <http://www.hermosabch.org/index.aspx?page=676>

About Hermosa Beach

Founded in 1907, Hermosa Beach is known as "The Best Little Beach City." Named "Southern California's Greenest City" for its work to protect the environment, it is a thriving community of some 20,000 residents located on the southern end of Santa Monica Bay in Los Angeles County, and its beaches have been ranked among the best in the world. To learn more, please visit www.hermosabch.org.

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