

**DRAFT SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL RECIRCULATED
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (SSREIR) (MARCH 2025)
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW**

This is to advise that the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department has prepared a Draft Second Supplemental Recirculated Environmental Impact Report (DSSREIR) (March 2025) for Revisions to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance – 2025(A), Focused on Oil and Gas Local Permitting. (SCH 2013081079). Comments are being requested on the modifications shown in **Bold** in the DSSREIR and explained in the Guide to Format section of each chapter.

As mandated by State law, the minimum public review period for this document is 45 days.

GUIDE TO FORMAT

This document is comprised of the Supplemental Recirculated EIR (SREIR - 2020/2021) and additions and changes for the Second Supplemental Recirculated EIR (2025). The reader can distinguish the difference in the documents as follows:

Supplemental Recirculated EIR (2020/2021) (SREIR) are shown as follows: *Except where specifically noted, all underlined and italicized text not in bold indicates additions, and italicized strikethrough text indicates deletions included in the SREIR (2020/2021). Non-italicized underlined and strikethrough text are the same as in the SREIR (2020/2021).*

Second Supplemental Recirculated EIR (2025) (SSREIR) are shown as follows: **Except where specifically noted, all underlined and bold text indicates additions, and bold underlined and strikethrough text indicates deletions for this SSREIR (2025).**

PUBLIC COMMENT: The required DSSREIR public review period is 45 days.

March 14th, 2025 – April 28th, 2025

Written comments may be submitted to the project planner identified below prior to the close of the DSSREIR public review period on **April 28th, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.** to:

Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
ATTN: Keith Alvidrez, Planner II
2700 “M” Street, Suite 100, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Phone: (661) 862-5015
E-mail: OG-SSREIRComments@kerncounty.com

PROJECT TITLE: Revisions to Title 19 - Kern County Zoning Ordinance – 2025(A), Focused on Oil and Gas Local Permitting.

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project boundary (local permitting boundary area) encompasses 3,700 square miles and generally includes the San Joaquin Valley Floor portion of Kern County up to an elevation of 2,000 feet. The boundary is defined by the San Luis Obispo County line on the west; the Kings and Tulare County lines on the north; the 2,000-foot elevation contours, squared off to the nearest section line on the east; and the northern boundary of the Los Padres National Forest on the south.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project is the reconsideration of the adoption of the Revisions to the Kern County Zoning Ordinance - 2025(A) focused on Oil and Gas Local Permitting and processing of this Draft Second Supplemental Recirculated Environmental Impact Report (DSSREIR) to provide the additional analysis

and content required to address the three California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) deficiencies in the SREIR (SREIR 2020/2021) that were identified in the Appellate Court opinion issued on March 7, 2024. The originally adopted ordinance and related actions were rescinded by order of the court on October 8, 2024. The proposed Project action is the reconsideration and proposed readoption of revisions to Title 19 of the Kern County Zoning Ordinance - 2020-A (Ordinance) for local permitting for oil and gas focused on Chapter 19.98 (Oil and Gas Production), to address oil and gas exploration and operation activities in greater detail by: (a) establishing updated development, implementation standards, and conditions to address environmental impacts of pre-drilling exploration, well drilling, and the operation of wells and other oil and gas production-related equipment and facilities, including exploration, production, completion, stimulation, reworking, injection, monitoring, and plugging and abandonment; and (b) establishing new “Oil and Gas Conformity Review” and “Minor Activity Review” ministerial permit procedures for County approval of future well drilling and operations to ensure compliance with the updated development and implementation standards and conditions and provide for ongoing tracking and compliance monitoring.

This SSREIR has modifications shown for analysis and proposed mitigation in the following resource area chapters:

- Chapter 4.2, Agricultural Resources
- Chapter 4.3, Air Quality
- Chapter 4.9, Hydrology and Water Quality
- Chapter 4.17, Utilities and Service Systems
- Chapter 4.18, Supplemental Analysis

CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 (f) (1) provides that when an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is recirculated, Kern County, as Lead Agency, may require that reviewers submit new comments on the SSREIR focused on those portions of the document that have been modified. All comments submitted on previous circulations of the EIR from 2015 to 2020/2021 have been provided and responded to in the specific Chapter 7 - Response to Comments included in the SSREIR attachments. Comments are being requested on the modifications shown in Bold in the SSREIR and explained in the Guide to Format section of each chapter.

Background

After the Final SREIR was certified and the Revised Ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 8, 2021, the SREIR was challenged by several parties. In response to the trial court’s June 7, 2022 decision on that challenge, on August 23, 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted revisions to certain mitigation measures pursuant to an Addendum to the SREIR. The challengers appealed.

In a decision dated March 7, 2024, the Court of Appeal of the State of California Fifth Appellate District rejected several of the challengers’ claims, but held that the SREIR and Addendum failed to comply with CEQA with respect to three issues: (1) mitigation for conversion of agricultural land; (2) adequacy of the MWHRA; and (3) analysis and mitigation for water supply impacts on disadvantaged communities. *V Lions Farming LLC v. County of Kern*, Case No. F084763, Slip Opinion (Cal. Ct. App. 5th Dist. March 7, 2024). The Court of Appeal directed that the County continue to suspend permitting and prepare a revised EIR that corrects the CEQA violations before bringing an oil and gas permit streamlining ordinance back to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. A full description of the legal decision can be found in the SSREIR (2025) Chapter 2, Introduction and Chapter 3 - Project Description.

ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENT: Agricultural Resources, Air Quality, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Utilities and Service Systems.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The entire DSSREIR and the documents referenced in it are available for public review by appointment at the Planning and Natural Resources Department, which is located at 2700 "M" Street, Suite 100, in Bakersfield, CA 93301 or on the Department website at: <https://kernplanning.com/final-environmental-impact-report-revisions-kern-county-zoning-ordinance-2015-c-focused-oil-gas-local-permitting/>

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS: The Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department will host a virtual public briefing workshop to provide an overview of the document and review opportunities for public comment. Spanish interpretation will be provided.

Public Workshop – April 15, 2025 at 10:00 to 11:30 am

Instructions for participating in this public workshop will be made available on April 11th, 2025 on the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources website: <https://kernplanning.com/final-environmental-impact-report-revisions-kern-county-zoning-ordinance-2015-c-focused-oil-gas-local-permitting/>

PUBLIC HEARING: A public hearing will be scheduled with the Kern County Planning Commission to receive comments and consider the project for recommendation for approval, conditional approval, or denial to the Kern County Board of Supervisors on:

DATE: June 12th, 2025
TIME: 7:00 P.M. or soon thereafter
LOCATION: Chambers of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center, First Floor
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301

A notice, as required by law will be sent in advance of the hearing and will provide the details for participation. Spanish translation will be provided at the Planning Commission Hearing.

After consideration by the Planning Commission, a noticed public hearing will be scheduled for the Kern County Board of Supervisors for final consideration and action. Comments may be provided at that hearing or prior to any action by the Board of Supervisors on any matter. The Board of Supervisors decision is final.

ASSISTANCE: If you have any questions about the DSSREIR or issues accessing the document, please contact the project planner directly:

Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
ATTN: Keith Alvidrez, Planner II
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100, Bakersfield, CA 93301
Phone: (661) 862-5015
E-mail: AlvidrezK@kerncounty.com

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
(Government Code Section 54953.2)

Disabled individuals who need special assistance to attend or participate in a Kern County Planning and Natural Resources virtual workshop may request assistance at the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department, 2700 "M" Street, Suite 100, Bakersfield, California 93301, or by calling Keith Alvidrez at (661) 862-5015. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting materials available in alternative formats. Requests for assistance should be made five (5) working days in advance whenever possible.

LORELEI H. OVIATT, AICP, Director
Planning and Natural Resources Department

To be published once only on next available date and as soon as possible

THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

TEHACHAPI NEWS

MOJAVE DESERT NEWS

MOUNTAIN ENTERPRISE

MIDWAY DRILLER

WASCO TRIBUNE

SHAFTER PRESS

EL POPULAR

ROSAMOND WEEKLY NEWS

KERN VALLEY SUN

DAILY INDEPENDENT

KTA (03/14/25)

cc: County Clerk (2) (with fee)
Environmental Status Board
Supervisorial District No. 1
Supervisorial District No. 2
Supervisorial District No. 3
Supervisorial District No. 4
Supervisorial District No. 5