



# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ACTION NETWORK

**Celebrating 20 Years of Action!**

For 20 years SBCAN has advocated throughout the county for social and economic justice, affordable housing, alternative transportation, protecting the environment and preserving open space.

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ACTION NETWORK TURNS 20 IN JANUARY 2022

In 2001, a group of community activists and leaders came together to discuss the future of Santa Barbara County. This group came to the consensus that although there were numerous local organizations and activists working on a wide range of progressive causes in the south county, their efforts were often fragmented and sometimes working at cross purposes. There was also little representation of the progressive point of view in the north county. There was a clear need for a countywide organization that could **bridge the gap between environmental and social justice issues and between the north and south county.**



George Floyd Memorial May 31, 2020

In January of 2002, Santa Barbara County Action Network was created to help progressives find and advocate for a united vision for the future of Santa Barbara County with a special focus on affordable housing, preserving open space and

expanding public transportation. SBCAN immediately made an impact as our executive director began speaking up at nearly all county Board of Supervisor's hearings. This was especially important in the North County where the progressive point of view often went unheard.



Youth Arts Alive July 13, 2018

SBCAN has continued to address community issues through **education and networking with other progressive organizations** and testifying at county and city public hearings on a wide range of issues. We collaborate with and amplify the work of aligned organizations such as CAUSE, NAACP, SURJ, Women's March, Central Coast Climate Justice Network, EDC, COAST/SBBIKE, Los Padres Forest Watch, League of Women Voters, Sierra Club, UFCW Local 770, SEIU Local 620 and 721, UDW, the Fund for Santa Barbara, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, Food & Water Watch, and more.

**SBCAN has helped many other progressive organizations by serving as their fiscal sponsor**, including programs and projects such as Youth Arts Alive, the Mickey Flacks Journalism Fund, Eco Vista, and the SY Valley Community Action Alliance.

## 2021

**2021 was full of challenges for environmental and social justice advocates across Santa Barbara County.**

This year we met virtually while the Coronavirus pandemic continued to threaten our community. We saw oil tanker trucks crash and spill, watched the Alisal fire burn in South County, experienced extreme and exceptional drought, and heard the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change give their most dire warnings yet while we waited for meaningful climate policy to be passed at the federal level.

Tragically, we witnessed the death of Juan Luis Olvera-Preciado in Guadalupe, Travis Daniel Carlon in Lompoc, and Krys Ruiz in Lompoc at the hands of the police. With the ending of eviction protections, we saw a rise in housing instability and a worsening of the housing crisis. Across the country we saw people's voting rights and reproductive health rights threatened. Now, more than ever we need to join together to fight back against the interconnected forces of climate change, police violence, racism, economic inequality, and social injustice.

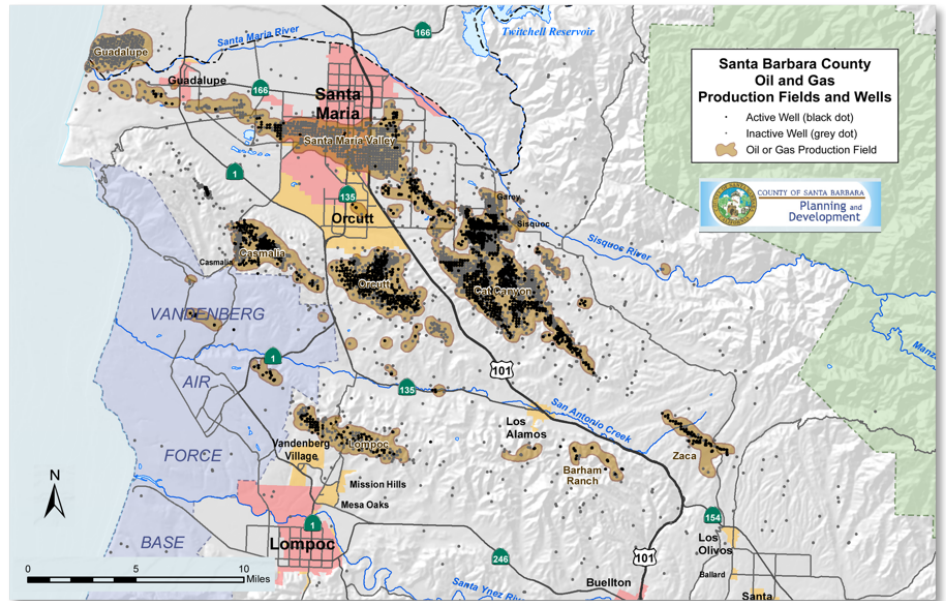
## OIL ISSUES AND ENERGY SOLUTIONS

In 2013, although Santa Maria Energy's project was approved by the county planning commission, we won **stronger protections** for the California Tiger Salamander and a requirement for the oil company to purchase **greenhouse gas offsets**.

Then in 2016 we had an even bigger win with the **denial of the Pacific Coast Energy Company's** plan to expand cyclic steaming wells on Orcutt Hill.

SBCAN was the first organization in Santa Barbara County to call attention to the **Phillips 66 plan to build a rail spur** to bring in **tar sands oil** just north of Guadalupe. In 2017, that project was denied by the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors, and Phillips 66 has since announced plans to close its oil refinery.

In 2020, three major oil projects that combined would have added **750 new oil wells to Cat Canyon** - most of them using dangerous cyclic steam injection - were all withdrawn. This was a huge victory for SBCAN and all the other organizations we worked in coalition with to fight these projects.



County Oil & Gas Production Fields and Wells. See more: [sbcan.org/issues\\_maps](https://sbcan.org/issues_maps)

In the fall of 2021, the County Planning Commission recommended **denial of ExxonMobil's trucking project** and offshore restart, which would significantly increase GHG emissions for Santa Barbara County and would require 70 truck trips per day on highways 101 and 166. The Board of Supervisors will make a decision on this project in early 2022.

In other good news, **two Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) projects** that SBCAN has supported since 2015 have been **implemented**: Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) throughout the County, and Santa Barbara Clean Energy in the city of Santa Barbara. Both programs have ambitious goals to provide residents with 100 percent renewable energy ahead of the state timeline.

For several years now, **no new permits for fossil fuel extraction projects have been granted in Santa Barbara County**, and SBCAN is working to keep it that way. We also advocate the implementation of setback zones between drilling sites and communities, the phasing out of current oil projects, and the promotion of a just transition to support oil workers and their families to bring them into the green economy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

SBCAN supported the successful campaign in 2020 to stop the development of luxury homes and instead preserve the **San Marcos Foothills**.

Earlier this year, we advocated for the **phasing out of Off Highway Vehicles on the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes**, which the Coastal Commission ordered. This will have a positive impact on both the wildlife in the dunes and the people living downwind from the driving area in Nipomo, Oceano, Guadalupe and Santa Maria who had experienced hazardous air quality due to the particulates being kicked up by the vehicles.

We also have opposed the leapfrog luxury housing project in Orcutt known as the **Neighborhoods at Hidden Canyon and Willow Creek**. As proposed, this project would have unavoidable and significant impacts to wildlife and would have not have any affordable units.



Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Oct. 19, 2021





Twitchell Reservoir March 17, 2021

At the last Planning Commission hearing in 2021, commissioners postponed the project indefinitely to give the developer more time to come up with a new design. We will be keeping an eye on this project in the coming months.

As we have done for more than 10 years, we continue to oppose the city of Lompoc's ongoing attempts to annex the prime agricultural land in the **Bailey Avenue Corridor**.

We are also paying close attention to the **Santa Maria General Plan Update** and will be discouraging annexation of surrounding areas and promoting mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Finally, we are getting involved with Creek Lands Conservation and CAUSE to protect and enhance the **Santa Maria Valley Watershed**.

## HOUSING AND WAGES

SBCAN, along with other organizations, successfully advocated for three months of **relocation assistance for renters** in the city of Santa Barbara evicted for no fault of their own. This assistance makes a significant difference to people who unexpectedly need to move out of their home.

SBCAN helped pass a **Hazard Premium pay** ordinance for grocery and drug store employees in the city of Santa Barbara in response to their increased exposure to the Coronavirus during the pandemic.

On several occasions, SBCAN has been one of few – or in some cases the sole – voice speaking in favor of **affordable housing projects in Santa Maria**. Some of the projects we supported in 2021 were the Centennial Gardens project and People's Self-Help Housing project at the Hi-Way Drive In, which is still in the process of getting approved.



Centennial Gardens conceptual rendition



UCSB Munger Hall conceptual rendition

The **Sustainable University Now (SUN) Coalition**, which SBCAN leads, has been pressuring UCSB to respond to our concerns about the lack of housing for students and the violation of their long-range development plan.

SUN was formed a decade ago in response to UCSB's Long-Range Development proposal, which aimed at an increase in campus enrollment from 20,000 to 25,000 by the year 2025.

After several years of negotiation about ways to mitigate the impacts of this growth, **SUN and UCSB forged a legally binding agreement** that dealt with remedies for many impacts. It covers water and energy use, traffic, public safety, and air quality, and it provides specific measures and approaches to compliance. UCSB has complied with most of its promised

mitigations—except for their promises to construct new on-campus housing for the 5,000 additional students, and 1,840 units of below-market-rate on-campus housing for faculty and staff. In other words, UCSB agreed that its growth should not adversely affect the already tight housing market in the region.

Meanwhile, the legislature has compelled the UC system to greatly accelerate its overall growth—and so UCSB reached the 25,000-enrollment cap in 2019—six years faster than had been planned. Meanwhile, the legislature did not provide the resources to accommodate the accelerated growth.

Some years ago, billionaire **Charles Munger** offered the campus some \$200 million to help house all of the 5,000 added students—thereby relieving the campus of the indebtedness burdens and constraints it was facing to provide such housing. Munger apparently has insisted on having control over the design of what would be the largest single dormitory

ever built in the world. That design was released publicly a few weeks ago resulting in international criticism and derision. Munger Hall was embraced as a solution—but it may turn out to have created further delays in meeting the urgent need. The city of Goleta has announced a suit against UC for noncompliance with its housing pledges. **SUN is engaged in legally buttressed efforts to compel UCSB to comply.** Stay tuned as matters unfold!

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the end of 2020, we hired Nadia Abushanab to be our **Advocacy and Events Director**, which has helped SBCAN to be more engaged in issues across the county.

Because of the pandemic, we held our **North County “Looking Forward” Awards Celebration** online on this year. To make up for not giving awards out in 2020 (also because of the pandemic), we gave awards and recognitions to 15 individuals and organizations, double the usual number.

**Honored in 2021** were Larry Bishop with the Environmental Protection and Sustainability Award, Pam Gates and Cliff Solomon with the Social Justice Award, Lorraine and Wally Waldau with the Giving Back to the Community Award, Zulema Aleman Garcia with the Working Families Award, Juliana Neel with the Youth Activist Award, Yasmin Dawson Selim with the Looking Forward Award, and Art Hibbits with the Lifetime Achievement Award.



North County “Looking Forward” Awards June 27, 2021

**We also gave special recognitions** to Jane Baxter, Dr. Melissa Smith, Dr. Van Do-Reynoso, Santa Barbara County Public Defender’s Racial Justice Committee, the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District, and UFCW Local 770. Thank you once again to our sponsors for supporting this celebration, to everyone who donated, and to everyone who purchased a ticket and attended. We hope to be able to celebrate with you in person in 2022.



Juliana Neel



Yasmin Dawson Selim



Art Hibbits

This year is the first year that the county supervisorial districts will be created by a **Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission**. SBCAN has been monitoring the process from the formation of the commission to the drawing of the maps and has been advocating to ensure that communities of interest – especially those with populations that have been marginalized historically – get proper representation at the County level.

SBCAN supported the efforts of SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) and other organizations in calling for a **reduction of the Sheriff's budget** and an increase of funding for community programs that address issues that lead to poverty and crime. Although the Board of Supervisors did not support our request, we will continue to push for this.

We have supported the grassroots process for developing the **Central Coast Green New Deal** and will continue to assist in developing and proposing policies that the community called for in a number of house meetings.

SBCAN is a member of the Steering Committee for the **Santa Barbara County Regional Climate Collaborative**, which is working on regional solutions to the problems that climate change poses such as sea-level rise.

## FUNDING

**Thank you to The Fund for Santa Barbara, our sponsors, donors and members!**

We rely on you all to finance our operations. We are especially happy to announce we recently received another highly competitive three-year grant from The Fund for Santa Barbara, while our project, Youth ARTS Alive, received a one-year grant from The Fund. These awards underscore the value SBCAN provides.



## SBCAN BOARD AND STAFF

### Dick Flacks – South County Co-Chair

Dick Flacks is a founder and has been a board member of SBCAN since the beginning. He is proud to serve as co-chair with Janet Blevins. He feels it is exciting to serve with a board whose members are each leaders in diverse communities across the county, to learn about and to help build bridges – fulfilling the goals SBCAN has had from the beginning. Flacks also feels fortunate to have on staff three people with wisdom, energy and multiple talents who serve our communities every day!

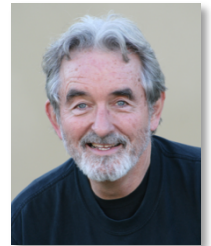


### Janet Blevins – North County Co-Chair

A long-time community activist, Janet Blevins has served on the SBCAN Board for several years. She is a retired teacher who continues to be involved in education as a member of the Lompoc School Board. Janet opposes onshore and offshore oil projects in Santa Barbara County, and is passionate about protecting our environment and public health. She was a lead organizer of the first Women's March in Lompoc in 2017 and has been active in the Sierra Club, the Santa Maria-Lompoc Branch of the NAACP, the Lompoc Valley Democratic Club and others for many years.

### Gale McNeeley – Secretary

Gale McNeeley moved to Santa Maria to perform and teach at PCPA after 10 years of work in AIDS services in San Diego. Since then he has worked as a writer, performer, teacher and activist. Gale says that his years with SBCAN have taught him how to be an agent of change. In 2017 he founded Youth ARTS Alive to provide free summer arts education for the children of Santa Maria. He is proud to serve as SBCAN's secretary.



### Jonathan Abboud – Treasurer

Jonathan co-founded the Isla Vista Self Governance Initiative in 2014, which was fiscally sponsored by SBCAN, and joined the board in 2016 to work on housing, transportation, and climate change issues. He went on to champion the creation of the Isla Vista Community Services District and now is its general manager. Also in 2014, Jonathan was elected to the Santa Barbara City College Board of Trustees running on building student housing and equity. He likes to cook, shop at the IV Food Cooperative, and go to the beach.

### Rebecca August – Board Member

Rebecca August has been an education, environmental, and social justice organizer in northern Santa Barbara County for 15 years, co-founded Safe Energy Now North County and SYV Community Action Alliance, and currently serves as the Director of Advocacy for Los Padres ForestWatch where she works on critical issues impacting local public lands. Rebecca joined the SBCAN board in 2015 because it was so effectively fighting oil expansion right in her backyard. She's stayed because of the organization's dedication to social justice and because it is the hub for progressive issues in the county.



### Carla Frisk – Board Member

Carla Frisk has lived and worked in Santa Barbara County for more than 45 years. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a certificate in Hazardous Waste Management, both from UCSB. She has worked for the California Coastal Commission, Assemblyman/Senator Jack O'Connell, The Trust for Public Land and is currently an environmental consultant with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. She has also provided her environmental expertise to a number of nonprofit organizations and received the first Environmental Advocate Award from the EDC in 2001.

### Rebeca Garcia – Board Member

Rebeca Garcia is proudly a Mexicana-Zapoteca artist and activist from the 5 Cities. As policy advocate with CAUSE and as an SBCAN board member, they are committed to fighting for justice and equity for the working-class and immigrant families of our community. Rebeca is excited to be completing her first year on the board in January.



### **Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt – Board Member**

Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt is president of the Santa Maria-Lompoc Branch of the NAACP, member of the Death Penalty Focus (DPF) Board of Directors, serving as vice-chair of outreach, and on the board of SBCAN since 2016. A former chief investigator in the Santa Barbara County Public Defender's Office, she was the first African-American woman in California to earn the title of chief investigator, a position she held from 1995 until she retired in 2016. As chief investigator, Lawanda assisted in the defense of several death penalty cases, an experience that cemented her opposition to the death penalty and her passion for civil rights and social justice.



### **Ana Rosa Rizo-Centino – Board Member**

Ana Rosa Rizo-Centino has served on the SBCAN board since 2018. She is the executive director for One Step A La Vez, an organization that helps youth take their first step towards a more positive future. Ana Rosa graduated from UCSB and has worked on language justice, educational access, government transparency, support for working families and environmental justice issues. Ana Rosa continues this work through her involvement in the grassroots Green New Deal project, her position on the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Commission and her role as vice president of the SB County Outreach and Equity Commission for our countywide climate action plan, among other projects.

### **Jaime Tinoco – Board Member**

Jaime Tinoco is a union business representative with IBEW Local 1245 and has been a board member for less than a year. Jaime was a lineman for the City of Lompoc for 32 years and is now retired from the trade. He supports SBCAN's Mission Statement regarding the environment, labor, political empowerment, and diversity. He is a community activist.



### **Ken Hough – Executive Director**

After a 30-plus year career in transportation, housing and regional planning, Ken Hough retired and joined the board of SBCAN in 2012. Not long after, the board asked him to be executive director, a position he had planned to fill for only a short time. Nine years later, he's enjoying working for SBCAN because he believes in the mission of protecting agricultural land and the workers, keeping growth within existing cities and towns as much as possible, and protecting water resources in the Santa Maria Valley.

### **Jeanne Sparks – Associate Director**

Jeanne Sparks has been an active member of the community since moving back to the Santa Maria Valley in 1986. She worked as a newspaper reporter and columnist at the Santa Maria Times, worked as the executive assistant to the Fifth District Supervisor for 12 years, served as an elected official on the SMV Water Conservation District and has volunteered on the boards of several nonprofits, including some that she co-founded. Jeanne is excited to be working on SMV watershed issues in a new alliance with Creek Lands Conservation and CAUSE.



### **Nadia Lee Abushanab – Advocacy and Events Director**

The newest member of our staff, Nadia Lee Abushanab, joined us in December 2020. Nadia moved to Santa Barbara to complete her B.A. in Environmental Studies at UCSB and has been here ever since. As SBCAN's advocacy and events director, she represents SBCAN at public meetings relating to issues such as oil development, housing, living wages, redistricting, and more. She is especially interested in creating a Green New Deal for the central coast and supporting a just transition away from fossil fuels.

## **CONTACT US**

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Become a member to support our work!

Visit [www.sbcan.org](http://www.sbcan.org) to sign up.