



Huge Community Turnout to Express Support for Protecting the Santa Barbara Channel from Future Oil Spills

On Tuesday, February 25, hundreds of community members attended the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors hearing and a public rally ahead of the meeting. The Supervisors were considering whether to transfer to Sable Offshore permits for the Santa Ynez Unit and associated oil and gas production infrastructure, which are currently held by ExxonMobil. This infrastructure along the sensitive Gaviota Coast includes three offshore platforms, two fossil fuel processing facilities and a corroded pipeline that ruptured 10 years ago, causing one of the largest oil spills in California history.

The February 25 hearing is part of a broader effort by Sable to restart the Santa Ynez Unit and the corroded pipelines. Several state and federal agencies will weigh in before a final determination is made, but last month's hearing may be the only opportunity for local elected officials to take a vote on this significant project.

During the seven-hour hearing, lawyers from the Environmental Defense Center, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper staff, and more than 75 community members spoke in favor of denial, pointing out that Sable Offshore has not demonstrated the financial capacity to remediate another massive spill and has repeatedly

violated state law. In his statement, Channelkeeper Executive Director Ted Morton listed the multiple Notices of Violation, Notices of Non-Compliance, and Cease and Desist Orders Sable has received since October, 2024 from the California Coastal Commission, Central Coast Regional Water Control Board and California Fish and Wildlife Department.

The legal analysis and powerful testimony helped convince Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to not approve the transfer of permits from Exxon to Sable, with Supervisors Capps and Lee voting to deny the transfer. The Board's 2-2 vote means that no action was taken. Channelkeeper and other local organizations assert that "no action" means that Sable's applications to transfer the permits were not approved.

Channelkeeper would like to thank the community for its tremendous support and acknowledge the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) for its outstanding work to prevent the pipeline's restart and protect our coast from future oil spills. EDC is representing Channelkeeper and a few other local organizations in vigorously opposing the restart of oil production from the Santa Ynez Unit and conveyance through its corroded pipeline.

The Fight's Not Over

Plan to attend the **March 13th State Public Meeting** hosted by Assemblymember Gregg Hart and Senator Monique Limón in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency. We will hear from eight state agencies who have regulatory oversight over the pipeline, including the California Coastal Commission, State Parks, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Questions are welcome for these agencies with advance submission (before Sunday, March 9) linked to your signing up to attend the meeting.

RSVP below or visit [Bit.ly/OilPipelineTownHall](https://bit.ly/OilPipelineTownHall) to submit your questions.

This is another important opportunity to stand up for the Coast and Channel.

State Public Meeting

Date: March 13, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm pre-meeting rally; 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm meeting

Location: Direct Relief International's Hatch Hall, 6100 Wallace Becknell Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93117.

RSVP



Support Creek Buffers

Protect Our Creeks, Community, and Wildlife

Voice Your Opinions on the Proposed Creek Buffer Ordinance

The City of Santa Barbara has released a draft ordinance proposing clear and consistent minimum buffers between development and city creeks. These buffers aim to keep our creeks healthy and our community safe by reducing flood risks, preventing erosion, protecting riparian habitats, and improving water quality. The ordinance establishes a minimum 50-foot buffer area from new or substantially redeveloped structures along major creeks and smaller buffers along flood control project reaches and minor creeks, a promising step toward ensuring our creeks function effectively, providing essential ecosystem services for the community, vital habitat for wildlife, and greater public safety.

The Cities of Goleta and Carpinteria, and Santa Barbara County already have similar creek buffers in place.

Find more information on the Creek Buffer Ordinance [here](#).

Submit written comments by Monday, March 24, 2025.

Email: CreekBuffers@SantaBarbaraCA.gov



Introducing California State Senate Bill 601 - The Right to Clean Water Act

California waters have benefitted from the federal Clean Water Act protections such as water quality standards, discharge permits, and citizen enforcement since the act was passed in 1972. The Clean Water Act has helped improve the health of our state waters and is inching them closer to meeting fishable, swimmable, and drinkable goals, but we still have work to do.

The U.S. Supreme Court *Sackett v. EPA* decision in 2023 overturned decades of federal protections for streams and wetlands, leaving state waters highly vulnerable to pollution and destruction. It ruled that the Clean Water Act's definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) is limited to wetlands that are directly connected to navigable waters, which narrows the scope of the Clean Water Act for many waters in the western United States.

California Senator Ben Allen (D-Los Angeles) introduced The Right to Clean Water Act (Senate Bill 601) to ensure federal protections in the federal Clean Water Act are embedded in state law. The Right to Clean Water Act intends to codify 50 years of federal protections in state law to ensure that California's clean water laws no longer ebb and flow with variable national politics.

The California Coastkeeper Alliance has partnered with Defenders of Wildlife to develop the legislation.

Channelkeeper is a member of the California Coastkeeper Alliance, a coalition of Waterkeeper groups that uses law, policy, science, and creative media to advance statewide policies and programs for healthy and clean waters. We will be working with our colleagues to build support for this important bill.



Westside Neighborhood Cleanup

March 8

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

This month, Channelkeeper is collaborating on a neighborhood cleanup with **The Turner Foundation**, an organization that creates innovative programs and services to lift our community up, focusing on young people, families, seniors, those with special needs, and those in need of financial support.

Join us on Saturday, March 8th at 10:00 am to remove trash from Santa Barbara's **Westside Neighborhood**. We will meet at 524 West Canon Perdido St., and clean up the surrounding streets and sidewalks.

Channelkeeper and The Turner Foundation will provide supplies, snacks, and pizza for volunteers after the cleanup!



**Save the Santa Barbara Steelhead - Town Hall Gathering
March 9**

1:00 to 3:00 pm
Lobero Theatre

Join the Santa Barbara Flyfishers on Sunday, March 9, to learn about the Southern California Steelhead and be inspired by artists, activists, and speakers working to save this species from extinction.

This free event aims to bring awareness to the Southern California Steelhead, a sea-run rainbow trout that thrived in local waters with historical runs of up to 30,000 fish annually but is now on the brink of extinction. According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, anadromous adult steelhead populations in Southern California watersheds are at critically low levels. Over the past decade, most streams have recorded no adult returns, and no watershed has seen more than ten individuals, due in large part to habitat destruction caused by dams, roads, and other barriers.

A panel discussion will cover the Southern California Steelhead's fascinating history, the effects of watershed changes, strategies to prevent extinction, and actions community members can take to help the species recover. Experts will include representatives from the Environmental Defense Center, Cal Trout, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Cachuma Project, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Koehler Winery, and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper.

Concurrently, Grace Fisher and artists from The Grace Fisher Foundation will conduct live steelhead-themed painting demonstrations and a collaborative art project on the Lobero Theatre Esplanade.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper
BLUE WATER BALL
March 29, 2025



“INTO THE CHANNEL”
with underwater filmmakers
HOWARD AND MICHELE HALL

The 23rd Blue Water Ball
March 29 • 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Cabrillo Pavilion

Tickets are going fast for Channelkeeper's Blue Water Ball!

Join us on Saturday, March 29th for an evening of dazzling visuals and firsthand accounts of Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Howard and Michele Hall's underwater explorations, highlighting the Santa Barbara Channel. The Halls' underwater natural history films capture the marvels of ocean habitats around the world with the intention of raising awareness of and increasing appreciation for the interconnectedness of species and the marine environment.

The evening includes a multicourse dinner, local wines and brews, live music, special guests, a fun raffle, and exciting auctions for art, gear, outdoor adventures, and more.

Ticket sales close March 10th but may sell out before then. Buy your tickets today!

[Tickets](#)



Support Clean Water

Want to make a difference for the environment and your community? Making a tax-deductible contribution to Santa Barbara Channelkeeper today is an investment in clean beaches, healthy watersheds, and a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your support!

[**Donate**](#)

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SINCE 1999



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