

**For Immediate Release**

January 19th, 2023

**Contact:** Gissela Chavez, gissela@cbeval.org, (323) 521-9445

**WILMINGTON RESIDENTS SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR,  
“NO OIL COMPANY IS ABOVE THE LAW!”**

*Los Angeles Zoning Administrator’s Virtual Hearing Flooded With Calls Urging Oil Operator’s  
Appeal be Denied and Ordered to Comply for Violation LA Municipal Code*

**Wilmington, CA** – Today, the Los Angeles Zoning Administrator (ZA) held a [virtual hearing](#) to consider an appeal filed by oil company Warren Resources Inc. (Warren) in response to a LA City Department of Building and Safety (DBS) Order to Comply. The DBS Order asserts that Warren violated the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) by intensifying neighborhood oil drilling operations without environmental review or City approval. During the hearing, Warren attempted to distract and misdirect the Zoning Administrator by carting out deceptive statistics about Warren’s impacts on ambient air and proximity to residences. Warren claimed to have the environmental footprint of a fast food drive thru despite having used millions pounds of carcinogens and endocrine disrupting chemicals at the site since 2013 ([Warren’s AQMD facility number is 144681](#)). Warren claimed its drilling site was located in a heavy industrial area despite its close proximity to hundreds of homes, [surrounded by residences on three sides within a 2-block radius](#).

The ZA heard concerns from Wilmington residents, stakeholders, allies, and community organizers with Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) who called in to urge the City to deny Warren’s appeal of the DBS Order to Comply. Concerned Wilmington residents also urged the City to hold Warren accountable for dodging environmental review—and illegally intensifying oil drilling operations near homes without City approval.

“Warren is a sophisticated oil operator that understands the Los Angeles Municipal Code and knowingly flouted it. As a result, Warren put Wilmington residents in harm’s way.” **said Alison Hahm, Attorney with CBE.** “CBE is not only concerned about upholding the law, particularly in the face of public endangerment by Warren. We also have a strong interest in deterring future violations by other oil operators like Warren.”

Last June, CBE and allies [demanded action from the city](#) after learning that Warren violated the Los Angeles Municipal Code by securing state authorizations to intensify oil drilling operations at the Warren WTU Facility by submitting outdated documents to California’s Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM). On numerous actions, Warren represented to CalGEM that it had valid City approval to intensify oil drilling operations and improperly obtained at least 22 oil permits from CalGEM. Warren appears to have acted upon at least five of these permits through new drilling, deepening, and reworks. Warren circumvented City requirements intended to safeguard community health and safety. [Warren intensified its drilling operations in Wilmington](#) based on illegal permits without notifying the City or local residents.

“Oil drilling smells horrible and it’s incredibly harmful to one’s health. The air in my community has made my family, friends, and me sick. I am deeply concerned by companies like Warren who disregard city laws... they couldn’t care less about the harm that they cause,” **said Luis**

**Martinez, Wilmington Resident and CBE Youth for Environmental Justice Alumni.** “The environmental review process they are sidestepping was intended to protect our health.

[On January 10th of this year, CBE filed a Letter Brief with the City](#) in Opposition to Warren’s Appeal of City of Los Angeles’ Order to Comply. CBE’s Letter Brief shows how Warren agreed to a maximum 12-year duration shaped by [Warren’s own Project Description from October 2005](#). In this Letter Brief, CBE cites letters from 2008 to the LA City Zoning Administrator and Harbor Area Planning Commission showing Warren defending the maximum 12-year drilling phasing plan by stating the [“Zoning Administrator Developed a Twelve Year Phasing Plan after Careful Consideration.”](#)

More than half of the [City of Los Angeles’ 704 active oil wells](#) are concentrated in Wilmington. Wilmington is home to more than 50,000 residents, more than 90% of whom are people of color. This concentration of toxic oil operations in a largely BIPOC community is not incidental, but the result of decades of racist land use decisions such as redlining and racial covenants.

Given the harmful health impacts Warren’s operations have on the Wilmington community, residents and advocates are calling on the Los Angeles Zoning Administrator, and the City, to prioritize community health and safety by enforcing the law against Warren and ordering appropriate remedies, including:

- Enforcing the Los Angeles Department of Building Safety’s Order to Warren to immediately discontinue activities lacking City approval pursuant to LAMC and implementing policies;
- Stopping Warren from further initiating any and all drilling activities lacking City approval pursuant to LAMC and implementing policies; and
- Initiating a compliance review by ordering Warren file a Plan Approval for compliance review pursuant to Section 13.01.

LA City Zoning Administrator Jonathan Hershey noted that “this is a complex issue,” and stated that “I will not make a determination about this today.” He further committed to taking this Warren matter “under advisement,” keeping the administrative record open until February 24, 2023 at 5pm to continue receiving written communication for the matter at hand. After the record is closed, a final decision will be reached, which will be appealable to the Area Planning Commission.

“Warren’s attempts to avoid Los Angeles law include baseless and audacious claims about the City’s authority to enforce its laws against institutional polluters. Warren failed to obtain city approval plain and simple, harming current residents and future generations of Wilmington in the process,” **said Theo Caretto, CBE Legal Fellow.**

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**Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)** is one of the preeminent environmental justice organizations in the nation. Founded in 1978, the mission of CBE is to build people’s power in California’s communities of color and low-income communities to achieve environmental health and justice by preventing and reducing pollution and building green, healthy, and sustainable communities and environments. CBE provides residents in heavily polluted urban communities in California with organizing

COMMUNITIES  
FOR A BETTER  
ENVIRONMENT  
established 1978

skills, leadership training and legal, scientific, and technical assistance so that they can successfully confront threats to their health and well-being.