



Cloverdale City Council
124 N. Cloverdale Boulevard
Cloverdale, CA 95425

To: Cloverdale City City Council
From: The Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS)
Date: September 27, 2022

Re: Agenda item G.1 – Discussion on potential participation in countywide ban on construction of new gas station infrastructure

Dear Mayor Lands, Vice Mayor Wolter, and Councilmembers:

Thank you for placing this item on your agenda. The Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS) is pleased to offer its enthusiastic support for Cloverdale to adopt an ordinance and make the necessary zoning code amendments in order to prohibit the construction of new gas stations and the expansion of fossil fuel pumping infrastructure at existing gas stations in the City of Cloverdale.

CONGAS, founded in 2019, is a Sonoma County community-based not-for-profit organization with a mission to halt the permitting and construction of new gas stations. Since our founding we have played a role in stopping three gas station proposals and have worked closely with the six cities¹ that have adopted prohibitions to date.

Our number one recommendation after having experienced six previous actions of this kind, is that the ordinance be kept as simple as possible and focus only on the act of prohibiting new gas stations and the expansion of gas/diesel pumps at existing stations. We've found that doing so can be complicated enough. Trying to include anything else that might impact existing operations or proactive measures about clean technologies that you might want to support, risks slowing down or even derailing the effort. All of the good actions you may want to take on improving walking, biking, transit, and clean vehicle infrastructure deserve full consideration in a separate action.

Three years ago this month, in September 2019, Cloverdale adopted a Climate Emergency Resolution.² The Resolution declared that *"a climate emergency threatens humanity"* and that the City of Cloverdale *"joins a nationwide call for a just transition away from fossil fuels"* and a commitment to *"enacting policies that dramatically reduce heat-trapping emissions...to restore a safe climate."* This action under

¹ Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, Cotati, Santa Rosa, Windsor

² <https://www.cloverdale.net/DocumentCenter/View/3643/Reso-91-2019-Climate-Emergency>



consideration is in alignment with the 2019 Resolution. Continuing to have a municipal code that permits the construction of new gas stations is inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the Resolution.

A Cloverdale prohibition would also be consistent with the statewide policy trajectory toward decarbonization. Just this past August, the California Air Resources Board formalized the Governor's Executive Order of 2020 ceasing registrations of new gas cars by 2035.³ All of the major auto makers are committed to increasing production of electric vehicles to meet this goal.

There are multiple reasons to support a prohibition on new gas stations in Cloverdale:

- Every new gas station creates a new toxic site. Inevitable leaks and spills pollute surface and groundwater, and soils, impacting human health and wildlife habitats. Sonoma County is riddled with leaking underground storage tanks;⁴
- Although there are currently no active proposals for new gas stations in Cloverdale, the reality is that there is nothing stopping a developer from proposing one. New gas stations are designed to last at least forty years. Long before that time elapses, we will need to have weaned ourselves off of gasoline to have a livable planet;
- In the event that a new gas station is proposed, without a ban in place, valuable city staff time will be taken up for a project that runs counter to city policy;
- The six operating gas stations that serve Cloverdale should be more than adequate as we transition to zero emission vehicles over the coming decade;
- This is a longstanding environmental justice issue given that every drop of gasoline leaves behind it a wake of destruction – from the extraction, to the transportation by rail, trucks, and pipelines, to refineries – almost always disproportionately impacting indigenous, low income, and communities of color. Ceasing to permit new gas stations is the first step in addressing this historic injustice.

Lastly, the Agenda Report, Budget/Financial Impact states that *"the City would forgo new tax revenues that could have resulted from potential new gas stations and/or gas station expansions."* The reality is that in California, revenue from gasoline sales are aggregated at the state level, then allocated to cities based on population and number of registered vehicles, and these revenues typically amount to a small percent of a city's total revenues.⁵ So a new gas station in Cloverdale would not significantly increase tax revenues.

³ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/california-moves-accelerate-100-new-zero-emission-vehicle-sales-2035>

⁴ https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?global_id=T0609700749

⁵ <https://www.coltura.org/gas-stations> (scroll to FAQs > The Role of Cities and States, bullet #1)



CONGAS looks forward to working collaboratively to achieve our shared objectives – an equity-centered, safe, clean-emission, climate smart future for Cloverdale. We urge you to pursue a prohibition on new gas stations as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "Jenny Blaker" and the second is "Woody Hastings".

Jenny Blaker and Woody Hastings, Co-coordinators, CONGAS