

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

June 11, 2014

Protesters ask California Coastal Commission to weigh fracking's effect on environment

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Long Beach Press
Telegram

HUNTINGTON BEACH
>> Protesters on Wednesday implored the California Coastal Commission to consider the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing process to mine oil and gas known as fracking on local coastal areas.

A small group of protesters wearing hazmat suits and carrying signs that read "Sea Turtles Against Fracking" stood outside of Huntington Beach City Hall where the commission met and yelled chants such as "Keep the oil in the soil before they make the oceans boil."

Among those who came out to support the cause was Long Beach resident Steve Yaffee, who called for a moratorium on fracking until scientists



Center for Biological Diversity staged a protest against fracking on Wednesday outside Huntington Beach City Hall as the California Coastal Commission met inside. Steve McCrank/Daily Breeze

can completely study the environmental impacts of the process, which involves drilling and injecting fluid into the ground to break up shale rocks and release oil and natural gas from within the rocks.

"We shouldn't be doing anything until the scientific evidence is in," Yaffee said. "Oil companies are looking to make money and their way to do it is the quickest and

easiest way, but that's not always the best for people and the environment."

The Center for Biological Diversity, a San Francisco-based conservation group, helped organize Wednesday's protest, one of several protests in recent weeks in Long Beach and other coastal cities.

The center on Wednesday also released a report

contending that at least one-third of chemicals used in 12 fracking operations off California coasts are suspected ecological hazards and that more than one-third of these chemicals may affect human developmental and nervous systems.

A representative from the California Coastal Commission did not return a call for comment Wednesday, but Hillary Aidun, anti-fracking organizer at the Center for Biological Diversity, said that the commission started to look at fracking a few months ago at the urging of the center. Since February, rallies have been held outside of the commission's monthly meetings to keep the agency's attention on the issue, Aidun said.

"This is an issue that concerns a lot of people, particularly in our coastal areas where fracking has taken place," she said. "California can be a leader in clean energy technology. We have to rapidly transition away from fossil fuel and we know California can lead the nation in that effort."