



COALITION OPPOSING NEW GAS STATIONS (CONGAS)

Factsheet

Who We Are: CONGAS is a Sonoma County community-based all-volunteer coalition of individuals and organizations. CONGAS' mission is to stop the construction of new gas stations in Sonoma County and its nine cities. Since its emergence one year ago, CONGAS has:

- Defeated three gas station proposals
- Ballooned to over 1,000 names on petitions opposing new gas stations
- Grown an email listserv of over 120 individuals
- Garnered nearly 200 letters from individuals opposing new gas stations
- Garnered letters from over 15 Sonoma County-based environmental and social justice organizations in opposition to new gas stations;
- Raised funds for an appeal on a bad decision in the 874 N. Wright Road case (still pending)

- **Why We Oppose New Gas Stations:** The transportation sector is responsible for about 60% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Sonoma County. Rapidly moving to GHG-free mobility is a critical part of addressing the global climate crisis at the local level. Climate change is exacerbating the weather conditions that have brought our beautiful county an unending procession of devastating wildfires that have taken so many lives and homes. In light of this, new gas stations are the most nonsensical land use imaginable for our county. Locally, gas stations cause traffic congestion, risk leaking underground storage tanks, produce surface water contamination, and risk other public health and safety hazards.

In every drop that comes out of a gas pump, there is a trail of devastation for communities and the environment around the world that leads all the way back to the point of extraction of the crude oil from the ground.

- Many low-income communities of color in the US and around the world are "frontline communities" that are poisoned and/or displaced by effluent and emissions from these operations;
- Low-income communities along rail and roadways are threatened by the hazard of oil and gas transportation;
- Similar historically disadvantaged communities of color near refineries and gas processing facilities, "fenceline communities," face respiratory disorders, cancer, and death rates much higher than the national average;

How we oppose new gas stations:

- Educate ourselves and the community on the issues; research site specific concerns: e.g., existing gas stations nearby, surface or groundwater quality (wells, septic), habitat/species, traffic and safety, schools or other sensitive sites (air quality), historic value of site, impacts on existing businesses or residences, etc.;



- Work in coalition with other Sonoma County based organizations;
- Communicate with local government elected and appointed officials, staff, and other decisionmakers;
- Attend public meetings and hearings as early as possible in the process;
- Speak and write to decision-makers;
- Circulate petitions
- Organize demonstrations at proposed sites;
- Media outreach – conventional and social media

The Policy Context:

Local: In September 2019, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency, establishing this issue as a top governmental priority. Eight of Sonoma County's nine cities have done the same. The top priority of Sonoma County's Regional Climate Protection Authority's Strategic Plan 2025 is decarbonization, targeting greenhouse gas emission reductions.

State: On September 23, 2020, Governor Newsom issued an executive order prohibiting sales of new gas-powered vehicles after 2035. In light of this mandated phaseout, new stations to fuel this expiring mode of transportation make as little economic sense as they do environmental sense.

Our Track Record: CONGAS was initiated in February 2019, when Sonoma County residents became alarmed about a huge 24/7/365 16-pump gas station, car wash, and mini-mart proposal at State Route 116 and Stony Point Road in unincorporated Sonoma County between Cotati and Sebastopol. The community rose up and defeated the proposal on July 8, 2019, when the application was withdrawn amid fierce community opposition. We produced over 50 letters of opposition and turned out about 45 people to a community meeting.

Subsequently, CONGAS discovered three additional new gas station proposals. One was in unincorporated Sonoma County at 5300 Sebastopol Road at Highway 12 and Llano Road. Once again, CONGAS organized and garnered over 140 letters from individuals and community-based organizations. The applicant, citing opposition from the community, withdrew the item from a Planning Committee agenda on July 2, 2020.

The other two proposals are in Santa Rosa at 874 N. Wright Road on the west side and 43 Middle Rincon Road on the east side. Both of these proposals are still in play.

CONGAS works in coalition with many like-minded individuals and organizations. Please contact us for more information.