

Honorable Chair Rasmussen and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing regarding the February 3, 2026 agenda item authorizing Special Districts to develop a proposal with EGX Energy for the siting of geothermal facilities on the Southeast Treatment Plant property.

Public trust in government is extremely low right now. When major land-use or industrial proposals are advanced quietly, framed as “early-stage,” and brought forward **without supporting documentation**, it **deepens public skepticism** rather than alleviating it.

According to the staff memorandum, preliminary discussions have already taken place between County Administration, Special Districts, and EGX Energy. Yet the agenda packet includes no correspondence, no draft materials, no maps, no site concepts, and no independent analysis to support technical claims about subsurface heat or geology. From the public’s point of view, this creates the impression that decisions are being shaped before residents are even aware a proposal exists.

Bringing this forward now without a CEQA framework identified, no fiscal analysis, and no limits on negotiation scope raises questions about why this item is being advanced before basic information is made public. Even if the intent is benign, **the process itself undermines confidence.**

The Southeast Treatment Plant property is the same facility footprint, or immediately adjacent to the impact area, associated with the recent sewage spill. Environmental and regulatory implications of this massive disaster have no resolution in sight. Introducing new industrial development, particularly geothermal drilling and associated infrastructure, on a site with recent and significant contamination raises serious questions about baseline environmental conditions, cumulative impacts, and long-term liability. At a minimum, this context should be explicitly acknowledged and addressed before any further negotiations proceed.

I fear process failure. I fear a scenario where staff time is authorized, momentum builds, and the public is later told that too much work has been done to turn back, all before meaningful environmental review, community input, or financial transparency occurs.

For that reason, I respectfully urge the Board to condition any authorization on the following:

1. Public release of all communications, draft proposals, maps, and materials exchanged with EGX Energy to date.
2. A clear commitment that no lease terms, development agreements, or site configurations will be negotiated prior to CEQA review and public scoping.
3. Identification of the CEQA lead agency and anticipated review pathway before further negotiations proceed.

4. Independent geological and seismic analysis, along with full disclosure of long-term liability and well-closure responsibilities.
5. Clear Board-defined limits on the scope of staff negotiations, including acreage, number of wells, and lease duration.

Trust is built through transparency, not assurances. If this Board wants public confidence in decisions of this magnitude, it must insist on openness at the very beginning, not after the framework has already been set.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Rachel White