

# A GIANT LEAP FOR OCEAN-KIND...



## AT LAST! BECKER WELL GETS CAPPED

On Monday, February 26, 2018, a big ocean barge from Long Beach pulled up to Summerland, California, and oil workers began offloading massive oil-construction equipment to the shore at the west end of Summerland beach. The target? The infamous **Becker Onshore Well**, which had been leaking onto the beach and into the ocean ever since it was improperly abandoned during Summerland's wildcatting years of the early 1900s.



### BECKER TIMELINE

- Summerland citizens rabble-rouse about the problem when the well starts leaking oil more than usual in 2014;
- HTO learns the State Lands Commission (SLC) has no budget to cap Becker, and contracts with **Dudek to apply for a \$1.5 million grant to cap the well;**
- HTO attends SLC hearing in Orange County, August 2015, to announce **we will find the funds;**
- SLC officials come to HTO office in Santa Barbara to collaborate on grant application. Unfortunately, we can't find the **\$200K for CEQA**, and the application is not submitted;
  - Then-**Assemblyman Das Williams** successfully introduces \$750K for Becker project into State budget FY 2016/2017;
- With other groups, HTO goes on massive letter-writing campaign to Governor Jerry Brown, and the Governor approves the funding;
- At the end of 2016, however, SLC officials tell an audience in Carpinteria **it doesn't have the other half (\$750K)** needed to get the job done. HTO responds by telling SLC we will sell lemonade, do *anything* to find the funds;
- January 2017, SLC introduces needed funds into State budget for FY 2017/2018;
- By this time, Summerland residents/ocean lovers **Michael & Nora McNeely Hurley** have joined the fight, and Nora goes to the beach almost every day to photograph Becker Well leaking onto the beach – and sends photos and video to the State Lands Commission;
- With all necessary funds for capping so very close to being in hand, HTO goes on **Rabid Letter Writing Campaign** to get very unique cards on Governor Jerry Brown's desk, asking him to approve the \$750K in the State budget.
- The Governor says **YES!**



The giant barge from Curtin Maritime, Long Beach, is towed into Summerland Beach in front of Becker Well, and drops a giant pipe onto the beach. This "cofferdam" is hammered into the sand around the well and pumped clear of sand and water to create a work space. The work platform is lowered on top of the cofferdam so that workers can descend to the top of the well and do their magic.

All photos by Harry Rabin/  
On the Wave Productions



Michael Hurley, Hillary, Nora McNeely Hurley

### NORA MCNEELY HURLEY'S PERSONAL CAMPAIGN

Nora McNeely Hurley is an ardent ocean lover (and HTO Advisory Board Member), who lives with her husband Michael Hurley (also Advisory Board) in Summerland, overlooking the beach. Almost every day she would take her camera down to Becker Well and photograph and film it, and send to State Lands Commission officials with a message saying "Hellllp!"



Becker Well in Leaking Form  
(Photo by Nora McNeely Hurley)

### HTO'S POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

We wanted to flood the Governor's desk with pleas for his approval of Becker funds, so we published an E-letter with a number of different messages people could pick from. We handwrote the messages onto postcards that we had created in the office. There was much art and cutting and gluing and stamping – and in the end, 250 of these colorful cards landed on the Governor's desk...and he said YES!



### SB 44 - OIL CLEANUP ACT

The Becker Onshore Well is just one uncapped oil well problem along the California Coast, and in December 2016, **Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson** introduced SB 44 – the **Coastal Hazard and Legacy Oil and Gas Well Removal and Remediation Program**. The bill will create a program to address over 200 oil wells in California's coastal waters that are improperly abandoned and leaking oil into the ocean. HTO went wildly

to work to get this bill passed, hiring **Aqueos Corporation** and **Planck Aerosystems** to conduct an aerial survey that definitively shows 4 wells off Summerland that are leaking every day and need capping. Our survey had much to do with SB 44 being signed by the Governor, because it was positive proof that it wasn't just seepage off the coast. HTO will now proceed with a dive survey, by Aqueos, to prepare for requesting funds from SB 44, to get these wells capped, too.