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Bob Smith Calls for Immediate State & Federal Investigation Into Oil Covering South Coast Beaches



CARPINTERIA, CA. Bob Smith, candidate for California's 24th Congressional District, today called for an immediate, coordinated state and federal investigation into the unusually heavy oil and tar washing onto South Coast beaches.

"This requires an all-hands-on-deck response from the state and federal government," Smith said. "Our beaches and ocean are the lifeblood of the Central Coast. They support our wildlife, tourism, local businesses, recreation, and quality of life. We cannot wait for the damage to worsen while elected officials remain silent."

Initial assessments indicate the petroleum may be coming from natural seeps. Natural seeps have existed here for thousands of years and are deeply connected to the history of the region. Spanish explorers named the area La Carpintería after observing Chumash craftspeople building tomols using naturally occurring tar to seal their vessels.

"But natural does not mean normal, harmless, or unworthy of an emergency response," Smith said. "We need to determine why the volume has become so severe, identify the source, understand what is driving it, and establish both an immediate cleanup plan and a long-term remediation strategy."

UC Santa Barbara researchers have studied the Coal Oil Point seep field for decades. Their research has found that oil and gas production from the South Ellwood Field reduced reservoir pressure and was associated with lower natural seepage.

"If the politically forced shutdown of production at South Ellwood and Platform Holly contributed to increased seepage, the public deserves to know the truth," Smith said. "Environmental policy should be judged by its actual environmental results, not by political narratives."

Smith called for immediate chemical fingerprinting, offshore seep measurements, reservoir pressure analysis, inspection of active and abandoned infrastructure, wildlife and economic impact assessments, and the public release of all findings.

"We have a world-class university in our own community, yet our elected officials continue to ignore its expertise when the findings may be politically inconvenient, whether the issue is geology, housing, or rent control," Smith said.

"Career politicians wait until it is politically convenient to speak. Leaders solve problems. We need to stop voting for career politicians and start electing leaders."

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