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DRILLING FOR OIL IN LOS ANGELES: AN URBAN LEGEND

Fittingly, the theme of the Long Beach meeting is all about finding and producing oil and gas in the Los Angeles Basin, a locale where literally millions of people now reside. It is axiomatic that petroleum operations to accomplish these objectives have to be compatible with the life styles of those who live here.

The City of Los Angeles embraces 457 square miles of land within the Los Angeles Basin, extending from the Port of Los Angeles on the south to the mountains behind San Fernando on the north and from Santa Monica Bay on the west to slightly east of City Hall on the east. Geographically and geologically, the City sits squarely atop the richest petroleum producing province in the world based on production per cubic mile of sediments. In this setting the City has achieved global acclaim for its ingenuity in permitting oil well drilling within its boundaries.

The paper will trace the history of petroleum development within Los Angeles, its successes and occasional failures and emphasize some of the unusual events accompanying urban operations. Above all, the paper will seek to establish the creativity of government and industry alike in adopting procedures designed to allow for the economic recovery of a valuable natural resource at no sacrifice to the integrity of urban planning.