

## News

### Walnut Prevails in Mt. Sac Solar Project Lawsuit

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Press Release

CITY OF WALNUT PREVAILS IN LAWSUIT AGAINST MT.SAC'S SOLAR PROJECT

**WALNUT, California (March, 16, 2017)** - Following a two-hour hearing on March, 14, 2017, the City of Walnut triumphed when Superior Court Judge James Chalfant ordered Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) to cease work on its solar installation project and respect the City of Walnut's health and safety rules. The ruling effectively stops the College from proceeding with a massive hillside grading project that would have negatively affected the community without mitigating action by the College. Mt. SAC was also found to have violated the California Environmental Quality Act and must revisit the Environment Impact Report on the project.

Mt. SAC's solar panel project would have required daily use of more than 100 heavy trucks on a 5-mile stretch of City streets for several weeks without any oversight or added traffic controls by the City's traffic engineer. Judge Chalfant confirmed the need for Mt. SAC to comply with the City's grading and truck hauling regulations which the City of Walnut has been seeking since the Solar Project was first revealed by the College.

"Successful partnership involves mutual respect for each partner, and I hope the courts have now demonstrated to Mt. SAC that they should partner with the City on projects of this magnitude, rather than try to bypass the City entirely. The Council and City Staff at Walnut have been working aggressively to ensure our residents and businesses are protected from the College's unilateral actions," stated Eric Ching, Mayor for the City of Walnut. "I support renewable clean energy projects, but all the environmental impacts of a project must be reviewed to make a good decision, and this ruling will ensure that finally happens."

The legal action that created Tuesday's outcome started on December 21, 2015 when the City filed a Petition for Writ of Mandate challenging the solar project. On October 20, 2016, the City of Walnut issued a stop order on Mt. SAC's contractor to prevent work moving forward on the hillside grading project. That stop work order was upheld by the court on December 6, 2016,

and the solar project was shelved pending the March 2017 hearing to resolve the underlying lawsuits. The March 14 ruling continues to reaffirm the City's legal position that Mt. SAC must respect the City's hillside grading and traffic management rules and be a better partner to the community of Walnut. Throughout this legal action, the City of Walnut has been joined by the United Walnut Taxpayers.

"This case is about public safety. It is unacceptable to introduce the level of traffic required by this project into our small community without first determining how to mitigate the impacts," said City Manager Rob Wishner. "The City has merely asked Mt. SAC to comply with the grading and haul truck requirements in our City just like other developers in the City routinely do."

The City's General Plan recognizes the unique topography as the City of Walnut's single most valuable resource and encourages grading operations to blend with the natural topography. The solar project would have wiped out a natural hillside just above Grand Avenue as part of a massive grading operation.

Mt. SAC will now need to partner with the City and comply with Walnut's rules and regulations to protect the health and safety of Walnut's residents. Mt. SAC will be required to prepare a new environmental impact report and re-execute a public hearing and comment process.

About City of Walnut: The City of Walnut is home to 30,150 residents located in the eastern part of Los Angeles County. Situated between the San Jose Mountains and the Puente Hills, Walnut offers a great environment to live, experience a rural lifestyle and celebrate the best of California.

For more information, please contact:

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