City of Grover Beach

Mayor John P. Shoals *Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lee*
Council Member Karen Bright, Council Member Barbara Nicolls, Council Member Mariam Shah

Robert Perrault
City Manager

October 6, 2015

Honorable Planning Commissioners
San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission
c/o James Bergman, Director of Planning and Building
976 Los Osos Street, Room 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO THE PHILLIPS 66 SANTA MARIA REFINERY EXPANSION PROJECT

Dear Planning Commissioners:

In the very near future, you will be reviewing the Santa Maria Refinery's request to expand the facilities in Nipomo to enable the plant to process crude oil. Once approved, the project would require an increase in the transport of crude oil along the Union Pacific Rail Line in our community to access the refinery. On September 21st, the Grover Beach City Council reviewed the project, allowed for public input, and conducted a detailed discussion on the project. At the end of the discussion, the Council directed me to write to you and express the Council's ***opposition*** to the project based on the potential rail safety impacts the project could have on the City of Grover Beach and its residents and the vital at-grade crossing at West Grand Avenue.

We are aware that on any given day trains pass through our city carrying hazardous materials. Currently an average of three trains a week is moving through the city carrying crude oil. In addition to the crude oil transport, trains typically carry a variety of hazardous materials, including ethanol, pesticides, and a whole host of toxic chemicals. Trains carrying these products can and do have accidents with unfortunate consequences. The City of Grover Beach can attest to this probability since we were impacted with a train derailment in 1986 that led to the evacuation of a portion of our community as a result of leaking chlorine gas from a tanker car. We know first-hand that when a derailment or spill takes place, ours and our neighbor's emergency resources will be immediately taxed. In addition the length of crude oil carrying trains is a concern. These trains from time to time block the West Grand Avenue at grade crossing which has the potential of delaying emergency response to the Highway 1 area of the City.

The potential of a rail accident and the subsequent impacts is a risk this city faces every day. Expansion of the refinery will increase the number of trains carrying crude oil through our city by as many as five (5) trains a week, thus increasing this risk. This City Council is strongly opposed to any project (including the Refinery Expansion) that carries with it the potential to increase the safety risk on a regional basis.

In transmitting this letter of opposition to you, we also want to make it clear the Council's position is directly related to the increased risks posed by the increase in the number of trains carrying crude oil, a hazardous material. It is in no way related to the current on site operations of the refinery, which we view as extremely safe. It is also not a reflection on Phillips 66 and the Santa Maria Refinery, which we believe are strong contributors to our local economy.

Sincerely,

JOHN P. SHOALS
Mayor

c: Adam Hill, 3rd District Supervisor, Board of Supervisors, San Luis Obispo County
Cities in San Luis Obispo County