

Dr. and Mrs. J. Dennis Steen

1835 Northwood Road

Nipomo, CA 93444

June 7, 2016

Dear Supervisors,

We are writing you as we are gravely concerned that the Union Pacific Crude Oil train recently derailed, overturned, and burned by the shore of the picturesque Columbia River Gorge. How would you feel if you voted for the Phillips 66 Rail Terminal Project and we in San Luis Obispo County experienced a catastrophe such as the one which just occurred in Oregon?

We decided to retire on the Central Coast and moved to Nipomo two years ago. We have come to love the area and all it offers. It would be criminal to risk the health and lives of the citizens here—to say nothing of the magnificent environment, by approving the Rail Spur.

Of the 96 tankers of highly volatile Bakken crude oil, similarly dangerous to diluted tar sands, 16 cars derailed. Four overturned, spilled their contents and caught fire. We saw the black smoke polluting the sky on a news broadcast. The train was only going 30 mph. Union Pacific acknowledged they were to blame and apologized for the “inconvenience” the accident caused. Woods were incinerated. Homes, schools and businesses had to be evacuated. In the town of Mosier, business and tourism were adversely affected by the black smoke and smell of burning crude. Interstate 84 was closed and motorists were evacuated. The derailment damaged the sewage plant and it was non-operational. Residents could not run water or flush toilets. An oil “sheen” was visible on the pristine Columbia River. The Fire Chief of Mosier, Jim Appleton, said: “I hope this becomes the death knell for this mode of shipping (rail) cargo. I think it’s insane.”

Do you want a catastrophe such as this on your collective consciences? Imagine an accident of this magnitude happening in San Luis Obispo County near your home, next to the school your children or grandchildren attend, your church or the hospital where a friend is a patient. The railroads can no longer claim a “safe track record”. Too many disasters have already been documented. The multitude of responders and resources necessary to deal with this recent Oregon disaster had to cost a fortune. The Oregon Governor stated that Mosier wasn’t prepared to handle the horrendous impact. Neither is SLO County!

Please study all of the aspects of this latest crude oil train disaster. We hope and pray they will influence you to vote “NO” on the Phillips 66 Rail Project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Dennis Steen, M.D. and Betsy Bixby Steen