

Tim Flynn
Mayor



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September 19, 2016

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

RE: Request that the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission Deny the Phillips 66 Company Santa Maria Refinery Rail Spur Extension Project

Honorable Chair and Commissioners:

As Mayor of the City of Oxnard ("Oxnard"), I write on behalf of the Oxnard City Council and our 206,000 residents to respectfully request that the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission ("Commission") uphold the Planning staff's recommendation to deny the proposed Phillips 66 Company Santa Maria Refinery Rail Spur Extension Project. Based on the project's Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), the project clearly poses a significant danger to the City of Oxnard and the region due to the unmitigated significant hazardous impacts associated with the transport of crude oil by rail, including the potential derailment of trains transporting crude oil.

The transport of up to 52,000 barrels of crude oil (about 2.2 million gallons) by 1.4 mile-long trains to the Phillips 66 Refinery would place an undue and dangerous burden to millions of California residents located along the United Pacific Railroad (UPRR) line. The UPRR line traverses through the City of Oxnard with seven crossings located near hospitals, schools, parks, prime agriculture land, and residential neighborhoods. The potential derailment of the 1.4 mile-long trains carrying crude oil and hazardous materials would create catastrophic consequences resulting in serious safety, economic, and environmental impacts to the City of Oxnard.

The Oxnard Union High School District (School District) passed Resolution #15-18 whereby the School District stated that even though its employees are state mandated disaster workers while on duty, many of the schools and personnel are not equipped to deal with a catastrophic event resulting from a potential derailment which would compromise their ability to protect the lives and wellbeing of their students and staff. Furthermore, based upon rail transport patterns, a derailment would result in approximately half of the City being cut-off from the City's only emergency hospital.

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The economic devastation resulting from a potential derailment would paralyze the City of Oxnard, including the region. A potential derailment would halt passenger and commercial trains along the UPRR line compromising residents who rely on passenger trains to commute to work, and businesses who rely on commercial trains to deliver products for sale and for maintaining their facilities operational. Additionally, a potential derailment could significantly disrupt fleet and operations from the Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC). It is important to note that the NBVC is a key facility in the Nation's defense infrastructure providing for the development and testing of new systems, joint warfare experimentation, engineering support, shipping and homeporting, and training and readiness missions. The FEIR seems to have overlooked the potential constraints placed on the above-mentioned operations of the NBVC in the event of a possible derailment.

The UPRR line runs along countless acres of agriculture prime land located within the County, and a derailment could cause irreversible environmental degradation to those acres of prime agriculture land. A potential derailment also poses a threat to the irrigation channels used to irrigate the acres of agriculture land, which would be a devastating blow to the State agriculture economy.

Finally, the City of Oxnard is obligated to oppose the Philips 66 Refinery Rail Spur Extension project based on the City's 2030 General Plan. Pursuant to Safety and Hazards Policy SH-7.4, the City shall:

“Actively oppose uses being considered by other agencies that pose an unacceptable high risk to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, workers, visitors, and the natural environment.”

Based on facts and concerns raised by a number of counties, cities, school and special districts, non-profits, concerned citizens and businesses across the state, a derailment in any of our jurisdictions would be catastrophic and result in serious health, economic and environmental devastation.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this project.

Sincerely,



Tim Flynn

Mayor

cc: City Council
Ventura County Board of Supervisors
City Managers of City of Ventura
City of Camarillo
City of Moorpark
City of Simi Valley