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Board of Supervisors
San Luis Obispo County

December 29, 2015

Board of Supervisors
San Luis Obispo County
1055 Monterey St. Rm D-170
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

As a longtime resident of the Bay Area, a business owner, a father and grandfather, I urge you to reject Phillips 66 proposal to ship crude oil by rail from northern California to San Luis Obispo County. By now you have heard all the safety and environmental concerns of residents up and down the state, so I won't repeat them.

I will simply say that our rail transportation system—tracks, rolling stock, bridges, and retaining walls—was not built for the transportation of extremely long trains of highly explosive crude oil. From northern California to San Luis Obispo, over-laden trains would wind through cities and towns, alongside schools, adjacent to waterways, and over bridges.

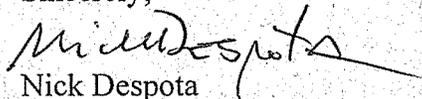
This is not simply alarmist rhetoric. The U.S. Department of Transportation Department of Railroad Administration states: "The volume of crude oil being shipped by rail has increased exponentially in recent years, and the number of significant accidents involving trains carrying ethanol or crude oil is unprecedented."¹

Risk-benefit analyses offer a valid method for assessing the projects that pose dangers to the public and the environment. In this case, while the economic benefits would accrue to Phillips 66, the risks would be borne by the public, and for the lifetime of the project.

The Phillips 66 project faces enormous popular opposition: 19 cities and counties, 13 school boards, and 16 organizations including unions, public health departments and water districts have come out against this reckless proposal. Public and elected officials, homeowners association, union officials—they all understand the risks.

I ask you to weigh the assurances of Phillips 66 executives and lobbyists against the objections of those who would actually bear the cost of disasters in their communities.

Sincerely,


Nick Despota

¹ U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Department of Railroad Administration
<https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L16335> Accessed on December 29, 2015.