

## San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission Hearing

### Re: Philipps 66's Rail Spur Permit Application

February 4-5, 1016

Comments by:

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My name is Robert Miller. I live in Goleta, about 500 feet from the rail line on which Philipps 66 wants to operate ticking time bombs. The risk of a massive explosion near my home is not speculative. In 1978 a 5.5 earthquake in Goleta caused a train derailment on the very same rail line, less than a half mile from my home.



*5.5 Earthquake on August 13, 1978 Caused Train Derailment near Haskell's Beach in Goleta, California*

If another earthquake in the same location derails a mile long train filled with over a million gallons of Canadian tar sand oil, myself, my wife and thousands of

others will die in a fiery explosion. And if the earthquake strikes during school hours, the death toll will include hundreds of elementary school children. Our Ellwood Elementary school is located directly adjacent to the railroad's right of way.

Such a derailment will cause thousands of gallons of oil to flow into the ocean from Devereux Creek or one of the other 11 creeks in Goleta that intersect with the rail line. Of course, the same environmental risk exists all along the 100 miles of rail line between Ventura and Santa Maria, where it continually runs close to the ocean. We will face an environmental disaster far greater than last summer's oil spill at Refugio.

And of course, we know that train derailments and accidents are not just caused by earthquakes. They occur for all kinds of reasons. And their frequency has increased dramatically in recent years, often with catastrophic results. In July 2013 47 persons were killed and blocks of homes and business were destroyed from a derailment in Quebec province. In December 2013, a derailment in Casselton, North Dakota caused a massive explosion, spilled 400,000 gallons of crude oil and caused the evacuation of 2,000 people. In April 2014 a derailment in Lynchburg, Virginia spilled 29,000 gallons of oil into the James River threatening the Richmond, Virginia water supply. In May 2015 a derailment in a rural area near Heimdal, North Dakota resulted in a massive explosion and fire that could not be extinguished. It had to burn itself out. The fire forced the evacuation of Heimdal. If it had occurred in a town or city hundreds or thousands of persons would have died. In July 2015 a derailment near Culbertson, Montana leaked enough oil to require an evacuation of nearby homes. 35,000 gallons of crude spilled into the rural environment of northeast Montana.

In short, these concerns are not ill founded, speculative or exaggerated. There couldn't be a clearer risk to the lives, health, property and environment of our community. For these reasons and others, the Goleta City Council has urged you to deny Phillips 66's permit application. And I applaud and strongly support the recommendation of the San Luis Obispo County Planning Department to deny the application. Thank you for listening to my comments.