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# California State Senate



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May 21, 2015

Ken Topping, Chair  
San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission  
976 Osos Street, Room 200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 94401

MAY 26

Dear Chair Topping:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension in San Luis Obispo County.

The proposed Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension would expand an existing rail spur and construct a crude oil unloading facility on the rail line near Phillips 66's Santa Maria Refinery (SMR). The proposed expansion would bring an additional five trains per week, with up to 80 cars per train carrying an equivalent of 53,000 barrels of crude oil, through San Luis Obispo County.

Increased oil by rail through not only San Luis Obispo County, but neighboring communities, poses significant and unavoidable threats, as a derailment near a heavily populated city like San Luis Obispo could be catastrophic. Recent rail accidents in West Virginia and Ontario, Canada, have resulted in devastating oil spills and subsequent fires, and compromised the public's safety and the local environment. Derailments are estimated to cost approximately \$4 billion for cleanup and emergency damages, along with the incalculable costs to the health and safety to the communities impacted.

While the current method of transporting crude oil to SMR relies heavily on large trucks that also present safety concerns to the public on our roadways, a single derailment of a train carrying 53,000 barrels of oil would produce a significantly greater amount of damage. Aging rail lines create the potential for the derailment of trains, even those that utilize some of the most advanced safety features.

Additionally, as the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) points out, a potential crude oil spill caused by a derailment would pose a threat to the agricultural industry in the area, as well as to environmentally sensitive habitats. The Union Pacific rail tracks, on which the increased number of trains would travel, pass directly through the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve in Monterey County, home to numerous endangered species. The hazardous discharge from a spill would contaminate water sources and jeopardize listed species and their habitats.

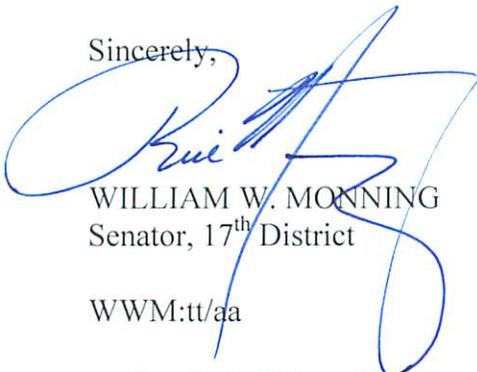
Ken Topping, Chair  
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The concerns I have expressed about the proposed project are shared by many local leaders, community groups, and a large group of local residents. With more than 11,000 comments submitted on the EIR, and the opposition of the County of Santa Cruz, the County of Monterey, and the City of San Luis Obispo, it is clear that the communities impacted by the project are extremely concerned about the threat that the proposed project might pose to their health and safety.

The benefits of extending the Phillips 66 rail spur to allow for increased crude oil shipments by train simply do not outweigh the potentially significant costs to the public's safety and the environment. It is for this reason that I urge the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission to reject the proposed Phillips 66 Rail Spur project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM W. MONNING  
Senator, 17<sup>th</sup> District

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cc: San Luis Obispo Planning Commission  
San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors  
Assemblymember Katcho Achadjian  
Representative Lois Capps