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Date: 11/24/2014 11:32 AM  
Subject: Just Say No

Dear Mr. Murry Wilson, SLO County Planning Department, and other concerned citizens of San Luis Obispo County,

With the clock rapidly ticking towards today's 4:30 pm deadline for comments concerning the proposed P66 Rail Terminal Project I thought I should overcome my tendency towards procrastination and add my 2 cents worth, or maybe 25 cents in today's economy. To be honest I am still surprised and shocked that anyone would be considering this project. The enormous risk entailed shipping crude oil by rail car has certainly been well documented this past year. The potential for leaks, possible explosions and or fires along with all of the other detrimental consequences of shipping crude oil by rail to the Nipomo facility are almost beyond comprehension. Air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, visual pollution and other environmental damage that this project would bring to the Nipomo coast line are just simply not acceptable to me and virtually everyone that I have talked to. The only people that would truly benefit from this proposal would be the corporate owners of P66. One argument that has been used to support this project is that there would be an increase in jobs at the refinery. As I understand it only 7-12 jobs would be added. Would that be worth all of the associated risks? I think not.

GOD-01

Many new homes have been built on the Nipomo Mesa in recent years. We are currently struggling with the issue of fine particulate matter potentially affecting our health. The added toxic fumes generated by the increase in diesel train traffic and potentially carcinogenic fumes that would be generated by the passing 80 oil tanker cars per train would not be beneficial to our overall well being.

GOD-02

I could go on and on regurgitating the objections that have been well documented by my peers but I think I would prefer to simply attach a document that summarizes the myriad of reasons this project should not be approved by the SLO County Planning Department. It is well written and based on substantiated facts. I would urge everyone that receives this email to read this document. It is my sincere hope that it would lead to a NO vote on this proposed project. I would like to underline the fact that SLO County would not be the only county impacted by this proposal. Any county, town, village or home that the 80 car trains, up to 5 per day, would be passing by would be impacted in a negative way if this proposal is approved.

GOD-03

I would like to close by suggesting that everyone that reads this email stop by the pleasant family owned Station Grill located across the tracks from the train station in Grover Beach at the base of Grand Avenue and sit at one of their outside tables. Try to envision what it would be like if one of those 1.5 mile long trains with its 80 oil tanker cars goes by while you are eating your cheese omelet. It is not a pretty picture in my mind.

Thanks for your consideration of my comments and best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving Holiday to you and yours.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Gorth  
915 Bea Ct

Nipomo, CA 93444

805-343-9502 (See attached file: \_Summaries & Reactions\_.doc)



Attached file is Mesa Refinery Watch Group letter which was submitted as a separate comment letter (Letter code - MSWG)

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The Mesa Refinery Watch Group

DERAIL THE SPUR

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**THE PHILLIPS 66  
RAIL TERMINAL PROJECT:**

**Summaries & Reactions To The:**  
*“Recirculated Environmental  
Impact Report” (REIR)*

10/30/14



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### **A-1. The REIR's Structure And Timing For Response Are Inadequate**

The REIR states that *"all comments on the previous DEIR were reviewed and the revised Draft EIR was modified to address comments that were applicable to the revised document"* (CEQA citation). Our understanding is that there were approximately 800 comment documents submitted on the original DEIR.

- How is one to know which comments were considered "applicable" and sort out where and how they are treated in the revised DEIR? The revised DEIR should have been marked in the same manner as the Final EIR will be marked, by having vertical lines placed on the side of the page where there have been changes.
- And, given a new, 849-page document (!), how is the public to sort this out in just a 45 day comment period just as they prepare to receive family for the Thanksgiving holiday? This seems to be an unreasonable burden upon the public and a deficiency in the current iteration of the DEIR.

A second revised DEIR, with a new clock on the comment period would give the public at least some chance of sorting out the revisions and applicable comments that were considered in drafting the revised DEIR.

## A-2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Discrepancies And Unanswered Questions

**1. Year-Long Pollution & Congestion Accompanying Construction - Not Addressed:** The proposed Rail Terminal construction will last approximately 10 months. This will add an estimated 916 additional truck/worker trips to and from the construction site. Truck traffic will include heavy duty dump trucks, concrete trucks, water trucks, flatbed semi-trucks and various other construction equipment.

The majority of these trips will be on Willow Road between the construction site and Highway 101, primarily during daylight hours. This will add significant air, noise, visual pollution and congestion to this area that has many thousands of existing residents.

How will this year-long pollution and congestion be alleviated?

**2. Discrepancy - Length Of Trains Vs. Length Of Tracks:** The inbound 80-car unit trains will consist of three locomotives, two buffer cars, and the 80 tank cars at 90 ft. each. This makes the total length of the train almost 8,000 feet, or over a mile and a half long. The proposal states they will only be building 6,915 feet of new track. They do not give specific dimensions for the length of any spur. But they do state that each track will (supposedly) be long enough to hold an entire 8,000 foot train.

The math does not even add up for one train. However, the REIR also states that the facility could hold a second train if needed. This discrepancy is not taken into account in the REIR. There must be a far greater understanding of exactly what Phillips is proposing ... track length and other dimensions that properly support statements in the REIR.

**3. Noise Generated By Train Repairs - Not Addressed:** The REIR states (section 2.3.1) that existing track 765 will be repurposed as a "bad order" track. Bad order tracks are used to repair railcars that require repair before they can be moved again. Repairs of railcars can be very noisy and time consuming depending on the type of repair. There is no description of the type of repairs to be done on-site at Phillips, when they will be done during the day (daytime or nighttime), the level of anticipated noise, nor whether and how that noise will be alleviated.

### **A-3a. AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES: Visual Impacts That Cannot Be Mitigated**

**1. A Misrepresentation Of What Will Be Visible:** Sections of the Rail Terminal Project would be seen from public roadways, walking paths and residences within the Trilogy community, looking west past Highway 1. This includes views from Via Concha Road, Louise Lane, etc. These views would include the unloading facility, railroad tracks and trains as they arrive and depart.

The “Known Viewing Area” (KVA) photos presented in the REIR were taken at the intersection of Via Concha and Highway 1. The elevation at that point is only about 197 feet above sea level. This is misleading by 50%! For example, a more telling, accurate KVA would have been from the Trilogy homes adjacent to the second tee on the Monarch Dunes golf course. That elevation point is approximately 297 feet ... 100 feet (50%) higher! The view from that higher elevation, where the community actually resides, is far more encompassing of the Rail Terminal Project than specified in the REIR.

**2. Inserting A Rail Terminal That Blocks The “Scenic Vista”:** According to the REIR -- the view looking west from Highway 1 is considered a scenic vista because of the panoramic composition of natural and agricultural land use patterns, sweeping views of the dunes and the coastline, and the Pacific Ocean beyond. The REIR indicates that the Rail Terminal and its associated trains would reduce views of the open space in the mid-ground -- which is an “important visual contributor” to the overall scenic vista. Therefore the REIR states, this would be a significant impact.

**3. A Major Increase In Onsite Activity:** The REIR states (4.5.1.4) that “*between 1994 and 2011 (an 18 year period in which the Nipomo Mesa residential communities were built) the only discernible activity is within the coke yard.*” Therefore, building a rail terminal and unloading facility, plus the arrival and departure of 520 trains per year, each a 1.5 miles long, will be a sea change in the amount of activity residents will be exposed to.

**4. A Mitigation Solution That Will Not Work:** To alleviate the damage to the “scenic vista”, the REIR suggests that an earthen berm be constructed around the eastern perimeter of the Rail Terminal. It theorizes that a berm 10 - 20 feet tall would block the views of the rail spur and trains. That solution simply will not work, given that homes in Trilogy are actually at an elevation some 100’ higher than presented in the study. The visual destruction would remain.

### **A-3b. AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES: Lighting Impacts That Cannot Be Mitigated**

- 1. New Lighting Introduced For 50 - 60 Hours Per Week:** New outdoor lighting is proposed throughout the Rail Terminal Project. The unloading facility lights would introduce light into a new area. The perimeter of the crude oil unloading area would have floodlights on 30-foot tall poles every 300 feet. The unloading area lights would be used during the unloading operations, which could be five times per week for about 10 to 12 hours per unloading (i.e., 50 - 60 hours per week).
- 2. Residents Will Definitely See The New Lights:** The closest area residents would be approximately between one-half to one mile away ... well within sight during evening hours. The earthen berms that the REIR theorizes might be a mitigation approach, is a counter-intuitive solution. The berms would be 10' - 20' high. Yet the floodlights will be 30' high, 10' higher than the berms. Therefore, the impact of the lights will be visible from the elevated sites on Louise Lane, Eucalyptus Road, Tomas Court, etc.
- 3. Pointing The Lights Downward Is Not A Solution:** We're told the new lights would be pointed downward. However, while the lights would point downward, they'd obviously be illuminating the offloading facility and tank cars beneath them. Those surfaces will be lit up brightly to help employees go about their complex work.

The result - residents would see the bright reflected light on the surface of everything that's lit up at the unloading facility ... including the tracks, tank cars and the pumping station. Before them would be a brightly lit movie set, with all the machinery and characters in motion. And residents would have a front row seat.

- 4. Incompatibility With Residential Zoning:** All of this is highly incompatible with SLO County's having created and zoned the area next to the refinery as a residential community. To date, the community and refinery have lived harmoniously, with respect for the well-being of one another. The residents invested in their homes on the Mesa facing agricultural fields, dunes, the Pacific Ocean, and a relatively serene refinery, whose raw material was delivered by pipeline.

But if the rail terminal is approved, the entire environment would change, in the reflected bath of bright lights. So no matter which direction Phillips promises to point their new lights, the Rail Project should not see the light of day.

**A-4a. AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GASES:  
The Serious Environmental Threats - Five “Class I” Damaging Impacts**

The original EIR recognized only two air quality impacts as “Class I” (*i.e., impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels*). However, in the REIR, the number of Class I impacts has more than doubled to five in that are “significant and unavoidable” ... obviously proving that the original analysis either purposely minimized these issues or was woefully inadequate in its observations.

In the new REIR, the following project impacts were classified as Class I:

1. (AQ.2): Operational activities associated with the Rail Spur Project at the Refinery would generate criteria pollutant emissions that exceed SLOCAPD thresholds.
2. (AQ.3): Operational activities of trains along the mainline rail route outside of SLO County associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate criteria pollutant emissions that exceed thresholds.
3. (AQ.4): Operational activities at the Refinery associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate toxic emissions that exceed SLOCAPCD thresholds.
4. (AQ.5): Operational activities of trains along the mainline rail route associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate toxic emissions that exceed thresholds.
5. (AQ.6): Operational activities associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions that exceed SLOCAPCD thresholds.

**The Key Issues ...**

- **Heightened Recognition Of Specific Threats To Citizens’ Health:** This REIR recognizes the serious nature of the health risks raised by this project. Increased risks in important health categories such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease (especially in the very young and very old) and premature death are recognized and in some cases the risks are quantified.
- **Heightened Recognition Of A Threat To Global Climate Change:** The impact of this project on California’s and SLO County’s programs to reduce the threat of global climate change is also quantified in this REIR and the increase in greenhouse gas emissions of this project are found to exceed thresholds.
- **Impractical And Unenforceable Mitigation Measures** Although there are mitigation measures discussed in this EIR for all five Class I impacts, the EIR’s discussion of the measures, for the most part, makes it very clear they are not truly feasible or adequately enforceable.
- **Not Taking Into Account All The Criteria For Determining Compliance With Air Pollution Standards:** An issue of great concern with the REIR is its singular reliance on emissions increase thresholds as the sole criteria for the determination of significance under CEQA. The County has identified a list of criteria that can be used as a basis for determining “significance” under CEQA. An emissions increase threshold is only one of them.

Given that this project lies in the heart of a region where the state health standard for particulate matter is violated over 70 times per year and where the federal health standard has been violated in each of the

last three years, we believe that any increase in the emissions of particulate matter at this project site violates additional CEQA significance criteria.

#### **A-4b. AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GASES:**

##### **The Refining Of Tar Sands Leads To A Host Of Major Health Problems**

- 1. The Arrival Of "Tar Sands" In SLO County:** The Nipomo refinery's superintendent has told us that with the Rail Terminal Project, there's a good possibility (we think probability) they will ship in "tar sands" crude oil from Alberta, Canada. Tar sands (a "heavy" crude) has substantially higher concentrations of sulfur, copper, nickel, nitrogen, lead and benzene than are found in conventional crude.
- 2. Health Issue #1 - Higher Levels Of Sulfur Dioxide:** The main danger to communities is that facilities that refine tar sands could emit significantly higher amounts of sulfur dioxide. And that could lead to chest tightness, asthma, reduced lung function, respiratory weakness and cardiovascular issues, as well as cancer. Sulfur dioxide is especially dangerous for people who have preexisting heart and lung conditions.
- 3. Health Issue #2 - Increased Quantities Of Petroleum Coke:** But the refining of tar sands also yields a significantly higher amount of petroleum coke, known as "petcoke." Phillips' Nipomo refinery already produces petcoke. And it's left onsite as widespread, open hills of black granules and dust. This waste product can easily be blown into residential areas by onshore winds and breathed in by residents. Petcoke is linked to a potential increase in heart attacks and respiratory issues.

**A-5. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:****A Myriad Of Impacts On Wildlife, Our Land, Tourism & Residents**

- 1. Impact On Wildlife:** Wildlife will be impacted by fuel management, vegetation removal, night lighting and storm run off of pollutants. Aquatic resources on the adjacent property could be impacted by hazardous material spills. (sec. 4.4-22) The REIR doesn't address how the loss of wildlife would affect people on the Mesa and tourism. Cleanups would involve heavy traffic and polluting diesel trucks, further damaging wildlife.
- 2. Impact On The Monarch Butterfly Habitat:** Impacts from construction and operational activities on the Butterfly Habitat are unknown due to a lack of sufficient scientific information. A lack of information doesn't mean there won't be an impact. The Habitat is located in the Trilogy development. It's an area walkers, tourists and naturalists enjoy and are drawn to. It's been stated that the Monarchs often do not return when areas become polluted. Loss of the Habitat would cause a loss of tourists, and negatively affect local residents and SLO County overall. (4.4-43)
- 3. Impact On SLO County Tourism:** SLO county has a minimum of 76 streams and crossings along the UPRR mainline. To clean a hazardous oil spill would require the mobilization of emergency response units and equipment. This would harm our reputation as a vacation area. Oil contaminated areas would alienate people who now travel to here for camping, hiking and our area's natural beauty.
- 4. Impact On SLO County Residents:** The Rail Terminal project will have a negative effect on our community. Damage to our unique plant species, animal species and waterways would harm our tourism economy. The residential growth (which been encouraged and approved by the SLO planning commission) would be negatively impacted. Homeowners are attracted to the area because the County has been willing to put a protective emphasis on our natural environment. This has been a significant attraction to people who want a quality of life with a protection of our natural habitat and biological resources. The County has not been an area where heavy industry is allowed to be developed next to our sensitive biological resources and developing residential areas.

**A-6. GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES:****REIR Lacks A Facility Inspection Plan To Counter Earthquakes & Liquefaction**

The REIR\* states that damage to structures from liquefaction\*\* and ground accelerations from earthquakes “could be severe”, are considered potentially significant, and could result in hazardous oil spills, risk of fire, and surface and groundwater contamination.

The REIR further states - *“As discovered (from experience) ... existing building codes are often inadequate to completely protect engineered structures from hazards associated with large ground accelerations.”* As is typical of large scale industrial facilities, there is no local permit oversight for the aging structures and equipment at the Santa Maria Refinery beyond initial construction permitting.

Given the severe potential consequences to nearby residences of a structural failure within the refinery operation should severe ground shaking or liquefaction occur, there should be a mechanism in place for periodic inspection and review of existing and newly constructed facilities to account for corrosion and stressing of components over time.

The potential for nearby residents to suffer harm from an incompatible and intensified industrial facility is inconsistent with the goals of the San Luis Obispo General Plan.

\* Page 4.8-12, section 4.6.4, paragraphs 3 & 4

\*\*Definition: saturated or partially saturated soil substantially loses strength and stiffness in response to an applied stress, usually earthquake shaking or other sudden change in stress condition, causing it to behave like a liquid.

**A-7a. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:****The Historical Odds Of Rail Accidents Versus What's Actually Occurring**

Railroads and oil companies are shipping ever-larger amounts of crude by rail. And they're attempting to calm citizens' fears about rail accidents by citing outdated, historical statistics. For example ...

- The Association of American Railroads proudly notes that in the past, 99.9% of rail shipments of hazardous materials, including oil, reached their destination without a spill.

Unfortunately, current data is far more sobering. Looking strictly at oil shipments, spills are spiking. According to the Associated Press -- in 2009, before the oil drilling boom, just one rail oil spill was reported. But now, with the flood of new oil, the landscape is far different. Through November 2013, crude oil releases were reported from 137 rail cars versus just one car.

Here's another more current statistic. In the last five years, the number of tankers of crude transported by train in the U.S. has grown from under 10,000 to about 400,000 -- that's a 40-fold increase.

And over the next decade, rail oil shipments are forecast to increase from 1 million barrels each day to more than 4.5 million barrels every single day.

Therefore, you can toss the industry's outdated "odds" out the window. All you need do is read the news to learn the real facts. Freight trains carrying crude oil, propane and other hazardous materials are going off their tracks at alarming rates. Why? Because more trains are carrying that material.

The reality of what's actually happening and will continue to happen, flies in the face of the outdated, 99% odds and statistics handed out by railroads and oil companies. Simply put -- regardless of improvements in tank cars, far more crude oil shipped by rail equals far more trains derailling and far more disasters. It's all in the new numbers.

**A-7b. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:  
Phillips' "New" Rail Cars - They're Not As Safe As They Claim**

Early this year (Feb. '14) in a flyer to residents, Phillips stated it is "*committed to the safety of everyone in the communities where we operate. (Our) crude railcar fleet is one of the newest and are all DOT-111 cars ... including 2,000 that meet or exceed the Association of American Railroads safety standards\*. We are committed to our crude-by-rail strategy.*"

However, they fail to mention that it's the DOT-111 tank cars that have been involved in most or all of the previous derailments, explosions, fires and oil spills. While those cars may be state-of-the-art, the state-of-the-art has proven beyond doubt that it's not good enough.

- A May, 2013 Phillips press release reported on their new cars - "*During the first quarter (of 2013), the company took delivery of 400 railcars, which will transport crude to its refineries on the East and West Coasts.*"
- Yet, two months later, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer warned - "*DOT-111 tank cars are tragically flawed, causing potential damage & catastrophic loss of hazardous materials during derailments.*" He called for the "*Feds to require a phase-out plan of DOT-111 cars carrying oil. The DOT-111 tank car has proven particularly prone to spills, tears and fires in the event of a derailment, and it's simply unacceptable.*"
- A February '14 AP article quoted Ed Hamberger, the president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads, who said the industry has strongly urged the government to set new tank car standards. He said - "*We believe there needs to be a safer tank car.*"

So despite Phillips' desire for SLO County residents and officials to believe their new DOT-111 cars are a non-issue, they are and remain a state-of-the art safety risk. At the local level, Phillips may be committed to the safety of our communities. But it appears that at the corporate level they're far more committed to their "crude-by-rail strategy."

\*As of October 22, 2014, the company had bought or ordered 3,200 railcars, and planned to boost its fleet to 3,700.  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/23/crude-freight-unloading-idUSL2N0SI03D20141023>

**A-7c. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:****Phillips' New DOT-111 Rail Cars - The REIR Bans Them From The Santa Maria Refinery**

In recent years, Phillips 66 rushed to take advantage of low cost crude and low cost transportation of that crude by purchasing thousands of their own rail tank cars. Each of these cars is the model DOT-111. This model has been involved in many derailments, during which the cars puncture or break open, spill crude oil, catch on fire and sometimes explode.

Yet this is the car Phillips continued to purchase. Their February, 2014 flyer to SLO citizens stated - "*Our fleet includes 2,000 newly acquired cars ... and all are DOT 111 cars.*"\*

But on July 23, 2014, U.S. Federal regulators determined that oil companies and railroads were dead wrong in their huge escalation of crude-by-rail, using outmoded DOT-111 tank cars. The Department of Transportation (DOT) decided it would now require shippers to use dramatically different cars.

- The serious deficiencies of the DOT-111 are well known and therefore taken into account in the REIR. It states (4.7-69; page 489) -- "Only rail cars in Table 4.7.6 (on page 447), *shall be allowed to unload crude oil at the Santa Maria Refinery.*" And that table requires shippers to use a new model car that's yet to be produced -- the DOT-117.

Therefore, the tankers Phillips intends to use to ship its crude oil to SLO County, will be outdated DOT-111 tankers that have proven to be failure-prone.

\*As of October 22, 2014, the company had bought or ordered 3,200 railcars, and planned to boost its fleet to 3,700. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/23/crude-freight-unloading-idUSL2N0SI03D20141023>

**A-7d. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:  
The Danger Of Transporting Crude Oil Down The Cuesta Grade**

Under the Phillips 66 proposal, five trains each with 80 fully-loaded oil tankers would arrive at the Santa Maria Refinery each week. This means that 20,800 loaded tank cars per year would be entering our County headed to the Nipomo Mesa.

A great many of these trains will come from the north and have to pass up over and then down the Cuesta Grade ... a very mountainous area north of SLO with an extremely steep pass (7% slope).

If you've ever driven south down the grade on Highway 101, you know how hair-raising and potentially dangerous that area is. Regardless of the precautions one takes, it's perfectly made for "runaway" cars and trains. And under the Phillips plan, their fully loaded tank cars would make their way, precariously down the Cuesta Grade. And on their return north, the same tankers would navigate the Grade yet again.

We estimate that each train will weigh approximately 11,632 tons coming down the Cuesta Grade. Therefore, when an almost twelve-thousand ton object carrying crude attempts to come down the Cuesta Grade, somewhere in our future is a disaster.

Indeed, the REIR states (4.11-25) "*In San Luis Obispo County, the Cuesta Grade represents an area where a runaway train could occur. A runaway train coming down the Cuesta Grade could result in spills of crude oil and associated fires.*"

**A-7e. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:  
The Widespread Evacuation Required By A Major Rail Accident**

If we've learned at least one thing from the crude oil train accidents that have already occurred, it's that the immediate impact is not limited to the accident site alone. For example, let's take the Casselton, ND accident ... where 18 tank cars exploded, toxic fumes were released, and 400,000 gallons of crude oil spilled. What happened immediately after the accident?

- All 2,300 Casselton residents were asked to evacuate their town. In fact, there was a 5-mile evacuation zone set up. Shelters were then set up outside the zone, where townspeople could then wait out the evacuation period.

Heaven forbid, but if such an accident occurred in SLO County, there would be one major difference between us and the Casselton disaster. Instead of having 2,300 residents, SLO County has 274,000 residents. And it's likely that far more people would be included in a 5-mile evacuation zone.

Let's take the city of San Luis Obispo, with a population of 45,000, not to mention the 18,000 students at Cal Poly. The oil trains would come right past the campus into downtown SLO. If downtown SLO were ground zero, and we drew a 5-mile evacuation circle around downtown, how many men, women, children and students would be encircled? We don't know that answer and don't wish to find out. And we don't wish to find out how long they'd be homeless.

So we need to learn from what other communities have gone through. We need to recognize that these accidents happen in a single spot, but the impact mushrooms out across huge swaths of those communities.

**A-8. LAND USE:****A Crude Oil Rail Yard & Terminal Is A Vastly Intensified Use Of The Refinery, Incompatible With Adjacent Residential Zoning**

Over the last two decades, SLO County planners have encouraged residential growth and master planned communities as desirable land use on the western Nipomo Mesa, near the Santa Maria Refinery. More specifically, their intended strategies triggered the building of communities with above-average tax bases per home.

In response to the planners' blessing, far more than 5,000 residents have already decided to live on the West Mesa, and the population continues to grow. Indeed, the County encourages expansion of existing communities and the construction of entirely new ones.

The growth of these communities was obviously applauded by past SLO County planning commissioners. The communities were purposely licensed, to be built with the expectations of beautiful views, golf courses, a resort hotel, and a serene way of life. The area was to become and has become, a divine place to visit and play, and a prime place to live and retire.

However, an oil-terminal RAIL yard, will generate far greater intense activity than the historic, benign delivery of crude by pipeline. Instead of crude conveyed silently, safely and unobtrusively, an entire new facility will be constructed ... with 520, 1.5 mile-long crude oil trains arriving and departing each year. Tankers would noisily be uncoupled from their locomotives. A half-billion gallons of crude would have to be pumped out. The tankers would then have to be hooked up to locomotives again. Plus, there would be numerous support machines and vehicles, all in constant motion, all year long.

The REIR states (4.5.1.4) that "*between 1994 and 2011 (an 18 year period in which the Nipomo Mesa residential communities were built) the only discernible activity is within the coke yard.*" Therefore, building a rail terminal and unloading facility, plus the arrival and departure of 520 trains per year, will be a sea change in the amount of activity residents will be exposed to.

The greatly enhanced intensity and danger of what Phillips proposes, changes the entire game for Mesa residents and for the citizens of SLO County. In effect, it pulls the rug out from what was originally intended by the planners.

Simply stated - delivery of crude oil to a rail terminal station conflicts dramatically with delivery of crude via pipeline. There is no comparison. It's an entirely new method of operating.

Therefore, approving the project is inconsistent with the historical decisions made by planning commissioners for the Nipomo Mesa. It would be incompatible with the long-term residential land use, planning and zoning decisions previously and consciously made for the area. The specific promise to residents of a safe, peaceful and pollution-free environment, must be kept.

## A-9. NOISE AND VIBRATION:

### Unacceptable Noise Levels From The New Rail Terminal

#### 1. The Results Of What P66 Proposes

The REIR indicates that "The noise model produced similar noise increases with the project as the November, 2013 DEIR" ... and that "The exceedances of the noise thresholds at noise-sensitive receptors are a potentially significant impact." (see 4.9-25 of REIR).

The REIR further indicates (4.9-24) that:

*"There are a number of uncertainties associated with estimating noise impacts. Meteorological conditions can strongly affect noise propagation and impacts, as most people have had experiences of hearing noisy activities a long distance from the source when the conditions are right. In addition, characterizing noise sources is challenging, as there are a number of potential activities, including hooking up rail cars, potential emergency annunciators and the low frequency locomotive noises that can travel long distances.*

*"The models capture many of these issues, but there is not extensive data available on some issues, such as good octave band analyses of different locomotive arrangements, for example, that bring in a range of potential errors into the analysis."*

Furthermore, Phillips's noise testing could be unreliable on its face. For example, let's look at the test it conducted to measure the noise level of moving railcars. (Noise Modeling Appendix at D.1-4).

This test lasted less than 30 minutes and consisted of moving full and empty rail cars around the spur. A total of 34 rail cars (not 80) and 2 locomotives (not 3) were used in this supposed exhaustive noise test. The conclusion drawn by Phillips was that the highest noise levels measured for the locomotive engines and rail cars at the spur "is more than 10 dBA below the daytime ambient noise levels, which indicate that activity on the existing rail spur ... is inaudible."

The public should not assume that "all is well" based upon this very limited and unrealistic noise test.

**2. How The Noise Will Be Generated:** Let's take a close look at what we'd be hearing from Phillips all year long ...

- Noise will come from blaring train whistles, as 260 fully-loaded, 1.5-mile-long trains enter SLO County each year, moving from north to south.
- Noise will come from blaring train whistles, as another 260 empty, mile-long trains leave SLO County each year, moving from south to north.
- Even more noise will come from the same 260 empty trains leaving the County, because empty cars have a tendency to shake, rattle and roll with even greater intensity than fully-loaded cars.
- Track noise will be generated by the 520 trains coming and going each year. That's the seemingly, never-ending, "clickety-clack" sound produced by the wheels of trains moving over the rails.
- Engine and vibration noise will be heard as 200-ton locomotives are forced to idle at crossings, in virtually every town in SLO County.

(continued)

In addition, locally on the Nipomo Mesa, here's what residents would now be hearing from the new Rail Terminal ...

- Engine and vibration noise will be heard as locomotives idle at the Nipomo refinery.
- Onsite, ongoing mechanical, operational noise will be heard on the Mesa from the new crude oil offloading facility, new pumping systems, HVAC equipment, and air compressors.
- Onsite, sharp clatter will be generated as locomotives disengage and then connect again with their tank cars ... 520 trains and 41,600 tankers a year.
- And also onsite, noise will be heard from additional vehicles, as cars, trucks and other construction and transport vehicles work to service the new rail operations.

**3. Our Response:** It is a given that trains would be moving about the spur at all hours of the night. However, the REIR leaves many details of their management plan to be developed in the future ... therefore, we have no way of knowing or assessing what mitigation measures Phillips would take.

**The bottom line** ... we cannot, nor should we accept on blind faith that Phillips has in fact properly monitored noise levels in the past. Likewise, we should not accept that Phillips would monitor noise levels properly in the future.

**A-10. EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES:  
Underfunded, Undertrained, Underequipped, Unprepared, Preempted**

The REIR states ...

- a. Fire Protection Services:** (4.11.1.3) *The SMR is within a High Fire Hazard Zone. Cal Fire can request assistance from other departments. There are 5 Hazardous Materials Emergency Response teams between Paso Robles and Santa Barbara. The one in Santa Barbara is a Level 1 certified team (highest level). The others are non-certified.*
- b. Emergency Response:** (4.11.2.2) *Many state agencies bear responsibilities (for emergency response). They are beginning to prepare for the heightened risks posed by oil by rail. Senate Bill 861 Oil Spill Prevention and Response provides funding for preparedness, spill response ... the law also imposes a tax on each barrel of crude to cover the cost of expanded spill response programs.*

**(UPDATE: As of 10/8/14, Union Pacific, BNSF and the Association of American Railroads sued California over its proposed law SB 861 requiring them to come up with an oil spill prevention and response plan. They contend that federal laws are safe enough and that the laws prohibit California from imposing safety rules on trains carrying crude oil.)**

- c. Fire Protection and Emergency Response at SMR:** (4.11-23) *A single significant event at the rail unloading facility could overwhelm the first responder resources and additional emergency responders and equipment could be required. Without proper fire protection design, training, and resources the impacts of a release of crude oil or fire could have significant impacts on fire protection and emergency response services.*
- d. Fire Protection and Emergency Response Along the UPRR Rail Routes:** (4.11-23) *The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has identified a number of Local Safety Hazard Sites (LSHS) within California, including the Cuesta Grade. Over the past 5 years there have been 58 derailments at or near LSHS sites. The Cuesta Grade represents an area where a runaway train could occur.*

OES (Office of Emergency Services) analysis revealed that numerous local emergency response offices lack adequate resources to respond to oil by rail accidents. Rural areas have little or no funding for firefighters and rely on volunteer firefighters. They lack the capacity to support a HAZMAT team and lack capacity to purchase or maintain necessary specialized vehicles and equipment, or to obtain training. Their response time could be hours.

Emergency responders lack adequate training in the specialized areas of oil rail safety and flammable liquid, lack critical information needed to help plan for and respond to oil by rail incidents, and how they would respond to potential worst-case scenarios.

- e. Residual Impact:** *Oil spill impacts to fire protection and emergency response services along the UPRR mainline tracks would be significant and unavoidable (Class 1).*
- f. Preemption:** *The County may be preempted by federal law from implementing (mitigation) measures because they might improperly impact interstate commerce or the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act (ICCTA) which preempts state laws.*

(continued)

**g. Cumulative Analysis:** *The Rail Spur Project combined with the proposed expansion of the Arroyo Grande Oil Field and the proposed Phillips 66 crude oil pipeline would increase the demand for specialized rescue services.*

*The Nipomo Mesa has thousands of homes in the initial response area of the Mesa fire Station 22. Specialized rapid and adequately staffed response is crucial. It is necessary to provide additional prevention and operational staffing to aggressively plan and train for effective mitigation of incidents.*

*As discussed in impact PS.4, an analysis by OES clearly indicates that fire and emergency responders lack resources, training and information in order to adequately respond to a crude oil train incident.*

**OUR CONCLUSIONS:** The Rail Terminal Project brings a full spectrum of never-before-seen dangers to all of SLO County ... including the very real potential for toxic fires, smoke, explosions and oil spills.

The REIR clearly states that local emergency services are currently underfunded, undertrained, underequipped and unprepared to deal with these dangers. Certainly, if the emergency services were built completely different and every single suggested mitigation measure correctly implemented, then possibly those dangers could be eliminated. But reality tells us that there is no practical way to make that happen.

Of course, then there's the federal preemption issue, which makes the implementation of all proper mitigation measures impossible.

Additionally, all of these measures are in response to disasters, not methods to prevent such occurrences. It's almost as if the REIR assumes that we must accept these calamities as a "new normal", and try to deal with them the best we can. Our opinion is that we simply need to say "no" to Phillips ... that we will not allow this kind of new normal to take hold in SLO County.

Lastly, there's the issue of who would pay for the huge spectrum of mitigation measures necessary to handle the catastrophes. SLO County Supervisor Caren Ray remarked on the Phillips proposal (10/10/14) -- *"We have emergency preparation we have to deal with including funding for decision making that we don't make here in the County. We have to make sure that our local tax payers don't get stuck with the bill for the rail."*

**B-1. OVERVIEW:****Phillips 66 Project And Why It's Wrong For SLO County**

- **Phillips' Proposal:** Since 1955, Phillips' Santa Maria Refinery (SMR) on the Nipomo Mesa has received crude oil only by pipeline ... not one drop by rail. Phillips proposes, for the first time, to bring in 20,800\* rail tankers per year to its refinery, fully loaded with crude oil.

Each year, 260 trains, each approximately a 1.5 miles-long, would traverse the county to the refinery and unload their crude. Then the same 260 trains would depart (520 trains in total per year).

Along with the arrival of loaded tankers, would come, for the first time, the construction of a "railcar unloading facility" at the refinery, a pumping station, and a new pipeline to move the crude within the refinery. This new operation would be accompanied by trucks and other vehicles to service the facility.

- **Phillips' True Motivation:** Phillips claims that the refinery is running out of the crude oil it receives via pipeline. Therefore, to keep the plant open, and to save the 140 jobs at the site, they must begin receiving crude by rail.

This is false. The output from the refinery is the same as it was 10 years ago, and sources of California crude continue to exist and grow. The true reason is that Phillips' corporate strategy has changed. As stated in its annual reports, the firm has switched to a "crude-by-rail" approach in order to access far cheaper crude oil from Canada and elsewhere the U.S. And the only way to access that crude is via rail.

- **The Negative Impacts Of Conducting Business In An Entirely New Way:** This represents an entirely new business model for Phillips - it's a dramatic transformation in the way they operate in SLO County. This is not a benign, unobtrusive "rail spur." The issue is the new intensity of their operations and what they intend to bring in on those rails -- a half-billion gallons of crude oil (561,800,000 gallons) transiting through SLO County by rail each year, forever.

Not only will the 520 trains and new rail terminal be highly invasive to SLO County, and not only will they bring significant pollution and the potential of major oil spills, but the types of crude likely to be delivered are highly dangerous to both the health and safety of our citizens.

This will very likely include the pollution-intensive "tar sands" (which has been called "*one of the world's dirtiest and most environmentally destructive sources of fuel*"). Previously, Phillips attempted to gain approval to ship in the highly explosive Bakken crude, but the outcry of SLO citizens forced the company to reverse course and finally say "*no Bakken.*"

- **What SLO County Officials Must Do:** Given the extreme opportunity for derailments, explosions and fires, along with air, odor, noise, motion, visual and light pollution, as well as potential oil spills anywhere in the County, the Planning Commission should reject Phillips' proposal to bring "crude-by-rail" to its Nipomo Mesa refinery.

\*Five trains per week x 80 tankers each x 52 weeks = 20,800 tanker cars.

**B-2. THE PRIMARY REASON TO REJECT THE RAIL PROJECT:  
The New Risks To SLO Citizens Vastly Outweigh The Benefits To Phillips 66**

Phillips 66 Rail Terminal project would be a dramatic transformation in its business model and method of operation in SLO County. Their revamped corporate business model is to maximize profits by turning our nation's rail lines into inherently unsafe "tank car pipelines," to take advantage of the new flood of lower-cost crude. This new business model brings a full suite of risks and consequences for the people of SLO County ...

- Air pollution that further increases an already unlawful situation on the Nipomo Mesa.
- Additional noise pollution.
- Additional light pollution.
- The visual pollution of 1.5 mile long trains, each hauling 80 crude oil tankers (520 trains arriving and departing each year ... averaging 10 each week, twice each working day!).
- The potential for oil spills.
- The potential for fires.
- The potential for explosions.
- The potential to damage the reputation of SLO County as a place to live, work and visit.
- And the potential to damage the economic well-being of our County overall and homeowners on the Nipomo Mesa.

Phillips' response to all of this has been ...

- *"Don't worry ... trust us - we can mitigate all of that."* We don't think so.
- Or, their response is *"We don't have to do anything, because we have 'credits' to spend based on what we fixed many years ago. We simply have to do nothing."*

We believe the vastly increased risks that this proposal brings to the citizens and businesses of SLO County are unacceptable. The risks of explosions, fires, oil spills, and air/noise/odor and light pollution enormously outweigh the benefits the plan bestows on an individual business entity -- that is, Phillips 66. Any honest risk/benefit analysis would lead to that conclusion.

Phillips wants to introduce a "new normal" into SLO County and the Nipomo Mesa ... hazards and dangers that do not currently exist here.

If a company that had never conducted business in SLO County came to the Planning Commission and Supervisors tomorrow, with the same new business model, new normal and associated risks, we're certain it would be rejected. The safety and well-being of our citizens trumps the new direction in which Phillips intends to take us all. That's why our Planning Commissioners must vote "No Project."

### **B-3. The Real Motivation Behind Why Phillips Wants To Bring In Crude By Rail**

In its communications to SLO citizens, Phillips 66 states - "*the pipeline limits us to sources on the Central coast, and as oil production in California has diminished, our sources for crude have declined.*" Therefore, they need rail delivery of crude and the need to build a rail yard, terminal and pumping station in Nipomo.

However, the true driver behind their desire to use rail is in their Annual Report issued early 2013. It was issued prior to their rail terminal application. And that report never once mentioned California nor their Nipomo refinery.

- The report's cover boldly claimed - "*We're Taking A Classic (Company) In A New Direction.*" Inside it stated - "*The American shale revolution has the potential to give Phillips 66 a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. However, limited domestic pipeline creates a challenge to transporting lower-cost crudes.*"

Their report continued -- "*In 2012, we reached an agreement to manufacture 2,000 railcars for the transport of shale crude to our refineries. The report called it their "crude-by-rail strategy". They said - "*These railcars provide a 'pipeline on wheels' to deliver crude to our refineries.*"*

- What did this tell us? It's corporate-speak for: Phillips has a major opportunity to generate profits from lower-cost crude. They can't quickly or inexpensively ship it to the U.S. coast via pipeline; so they've developed a "crude-by-rail strategy." And, they've already invested big bucks to be big players in "rail", and are attempting to leverage that investment.
- It also tells us Phillips' motivation is not altruistic in providing the U.S. with "energy independence." Rather, they want to take advantage of the growing export market to Asia.

The bottom line -- Phillips' claim of running out of crude to deliver by pipeline and the threat of lost jobs, is a red herring. It's meant to distract us from their true motivation. The company simply wants to change the types of crude they refine, because they're far more profitable. And that type of crude needs to be shipped to SLO County by rail.

#### **B-4. The Reality Of The Scope Of What Phillips Intends To Deliver To SLO County**

In its communications to SLO citizens, Phillips has consistently minimized the facts regarding what they intend to deliver via its rail project. They continually describe it simply as delivering ...

*"Five trains per week - a maximum of 80 cars each."*

However, their statistics fail to mention the reality of what they actually intend to deliver to us ...

- First of all, the 5 trains per week x 80 tank cars equals 400 tank cars per week.
- Those 400 tank cars x 52 weeks equals 20,800 tank cars arriving + another 20,800 tank cars departing per year. That's 41,600 tank cars working their way through SLO County.
- Within each of the arriving cars will be approximately 27,000 gallons of crude oil.\*
- So what's the annual bottom line? 20,800 tank cars carrying 27,000 gallons of crude oil each, equals 562 million gallons of crude oil ... more than one-half billion gallons each and every year moving into into SLO County by rail.

In contrast, not one drop of crude currently arrives by rail to their facility. Historically, it's all arrived via pipeline.

Therefore, a never-before half-billion gallons of crude would move down the tracks through our county, then be offloaded and refined on the Nipomo Mesa, every single year. This will inevitably and irrefutably inflict dangers and serious changes in the quality of life on our citizens, throughout SLO County.

\*The REIR issued 10/10/14 states that each car would carry between 26,076 and 28,105 gallons of crude.

### **B-5. Jobs At The Phillips Facility - Is SLO County Willing To Accept "Jobs At Any Cost"?**

We take no issue with the way Phillips currently operates, bringing in crude via pipeline. In fact, they've said that even if the rail terminal is approved, they'll continue bringing in crude by pipeline ... so pipeline delivery will remain part of their strategy. We also welcome the fact that their pipeline approach creates local jobs ... and we hope those jobs will be secure long into the future.

Unfortunately, their rail plan comes with unacceptable risks to the citizens of SLO County. Most prominently, there's the risk of disastrous accidents, as is happening and will continue to happen throughout the U.S. and Canada ... derailments followed by explosions, fire, death and destruction of property. Let's look at just two examples:

- In Lac-Megantic, Canada, a train carrying crude broke loose and rolled downhill into the town. All 72-cars on the train derailed on a sharp curve, crashed and exploded. The accident killed 47 people -- vaporizing many of their bodies. It flattened the center of their town.
- And just outside Casselton, North Dakota, a freight train derailed and crashed into a mile-long crude oil train. Thirty tank cars exploded. A huge fireball and plumes of black smoke went skyward. The blasts went on for hours, shaking homes and businesses. Toxic fumes were released, causing all 2,300 residents to evacuate. 400,000 gallons of crude oil spilled out of the tank cars.

These rail incidents all involved jobs. Jobs at refineries and on the railroads. But the citizens have rights as well. They have the right to remain free from fear, free from bodily harm, free from having to mourn the loss of friends and neighbors, free from having their property destroyed, and free from their environment being polluted.

And let's look at the other side of the coin. If a major rail accident occurred in SLO County, hundreds or thousands of County jobs could be lost. Residential and commercial construction jobs could be lost. Agricultural jobs could be lost. Leisure and hospitality jobs could be lost. Proposed office parks and hotels might not be built. Those looking to invest in new restaurants, shops, and professional businesses would look elsewhere. Simply put, do you think those kinds of investments are now being made or planned for places like Lac-Megantic, Canada or Casselton, South Dakota?

SLO County has approximately 275,000 men, women, children, parents and grandparents living here ... with 36,000 now living in South County alone. An additional 31,000 college students live in the county. There are an estimated 81,000 non-farm workers employed at 7,700 non-farm businesses. That's what's at risk with the Rail Terminal Project.

We hate to say it, but "jobs at any cost" is unacceptable. We respect the 140 people who work at the Nipomo refinery. We know they have families ... so do we. We hope Phillips, with their vast resources and many alternatives for crude oil, will see fit to keep those people employed. But jobs at any cost, if it causes intolerable risk for the citizens of SLO county, is far too costly.

## **B-6. The Contributions Of Nipomo Mesa Communities To Job Growth In SLO County**

A meaningful discussion of jobs at the Nipomo refinery must also include a discussion of jobs in the communities directly adjacent to that facility. In 1955, when the refinery was opened, our guess is that a relatively small number of jobs existed on the Mesa, outside the refinery.

But the scenario is now far different. SLO County gave its blessing to build multiple residential communities in that area ... houses paying higher-than-average taxes to the County. They're communities like Cypress Ridge (375 homes), Black Lake (554), Trilogy (1,320 at build-out), and others under construction or planned. Those three communities alone represent 2,249 homes ... roughly 4,500 adults.

What does that have to do with jobs? Quite simply, those residents generate jobs - lots of them. Let's take just one community ... Trilogy. Here are our best guesstimates ...

- Let's start with long-term construction jobs. This means work for dozens of local, skilled businesses with head of household jobs. We estimate 40 small-to-mid-size companies are involved - carpenters, HVAC contractors, electricians, landscapers, painters, decorators, cabinet people, flooring professionals,, and others. If each firm employs just five people, that's 200 jobs.
- Then there are the existing homes. Residents employ services such as landscapers, plumbers, electricians, painters, flooring people, etc. Let's say Trilogy's 600 existing homes already account for 75 permanent service jobs.
- Of course, those residents also shop throughout Nipomo and Arroyo Grande, accounting for hundreds of retail jobs.
- Then there's Trilogy's Monarch Club. Our best guesstimate is 40 permanent jobs in leisure, hospitality, maintenance and management.
- There's the Monarch Dunes Golf Course. Let's estimate another 25 year-round jobs.
- There's the community landscaping, maintenance and repair about another 20 permanent jobs.
- There's the planned Trilogy Business Park - a conservative guesstimate is 250 permanent jobs.
- There's a planned 500-room, resort-style hotel - perhaps another 250 permanent jobs.
- And Trilogy plans a Village Center with retail shops and services - another 100 permanent jobs.

That's about 1,000 in total, many being head-of-household jobs. And that's from Trilogy alone. Add in Cypress Ridge and Black Lake and we're talking about 2,000 or more jobs. And that doesn't include the planned developments in the area.

What does this have to do with the Phillips Rail Terminal project? It provides perspective about the 140 jobs Phillips implies will be lost if the project is denied. As a County, we need all the jobs that are created on the Mesa ... including both the Phillips jobs as well as those generated by the adjacent communities.

However, it also tells us that if a rail terminal were built there with all of its dangers, disruptions and pollution, countless jobs would be at risk.

(continued)

Why? Because the existing communities' reputations would be severely tarnished. They'd be far less desirable places to live and visit. Who would want to invest in a home or vacation next to a busy, polluting, dangerous oil rail terminal?

Very likely, fewer homes would be built. Construction jobs would be lost. Home values could suffer, along with declining taxes. Fewer services would be required. It's less likely that a resort hotel would be built. The Village Center retail shops would be less likely. Other shopping at downtown retail stores would be in jeopardy.

And what would happen to jobs if there were a major accident at or near the rail terminal? Not only would the communities' reputations be tarnished, but part of the communities might be physically destroyed or dangerously polluted. And we don't have to go into detail how that would affect jobs ... from leisure/hospitality jobs to tradesmen to retail and other service jobs.

So, any time you hear that the Phillips 66 Rail Terminal Project will have an impact on jobs, please broaden your thinking. Thousands of existing and future jobs are at stake ... throughout the Nipomo Mesa, and throughout SLO County.

## **B-7. The Impact On The Reputation & Financial Well Being Of SLO County**

With this proposed project, the entire reputation of SLO County is at stake -- as being a model for environmental protection, as a community concerned for the well being of its citizens, as a destination for tourists, as a location for parents to send their children to college, and as a primary example of what a community can stand for in an otherwise corporate-first world.

If a serious rail tanker accident or oil spill occurred in one or more of our towns, imagine the depth of the impact on SLO county overall. Let's start with ...

- Housing -- would you want to live in a county that sets itself up for such disasters?
- Leisure and hospitality -- would you want to vacation in such a county?
- Launching new businesses -- would you want to start a business in a "damaged" county?
- Employment -- would you want to work in such a county?
- Education -- would you want to send your children to school or college in such a county? (By the way, the tracks which would carry the crude oil trains, are directly across the street from Cal Poly, where more than 18,000 students reside.)

But let's take a specific example - the business of agriculture. If there were a rail accident, smoke and residue from oil fires settling on downwind crops would make them unmarketable. It would also potentially poison soil, so fields or vineyards would be useless for several growing seasons.

As another example, local leisure and hospitality losses quite possibly would not be recoverable, with detrimental effects on local economies.

If even one such serious incident occurred, the social and business reputations of the entire county would suffer ... and damage to that reputation would have severe economic & lifestyle consequences.

- No longer would Travel & Leisure rank SLO as one of the *top three Best College Towns* in America.
- No longer would TopRetirements count SLO County among the "*the most popular places to retire.*"
- No longer would Conde Nast Traveler call SLO "*the perfect weekend getaway.*"
- No longer would Oprah Winfrey select SLO as "*the happiest place in America.*"
- No longer would Gallup rank SLO & Paso Robles as one of the top 10 cities for *overall well-being.*
- And no longer could a National Geographic author write that SLO residents "*enjoy stratospheric levels of emotional well being.*" No longer could he write - "*It's a place filled with people not only happy IN their city but happy WITH their city - having much higher rates of satisfaction with their local government than citizens of other municipalities.*"

I'm sure you've heard the phrase that's often attached to SLO County - that it's "paradise." That's a great description, because it's been true.

But please, we ask that you not allow this generation of SLO County citizens and government officials to be the ones who allowed our County to become "paradise lost."

## **B-8. The Rail Project - Putting The Economic Health Of San Luis Obispo County In Serious Jeopardy**

Given statistics available early in 2014 -- we see that SLO County ranks a sterling second in California job expansion. And similarly, it has the fourth lowest unemployment, well below the state average.

SLO County also enjoys a double-A plus bond rating (AA+) from Fitch Ratings, one of only three counties in the state to receive this type of high overall credit rating.

Two sectors contribute greatly to this economic success -- the leisure/hospitality sector, and agriculture. These industries, and others such as real estate and retail, have spurred increases, not only in employment, but in local spending, reinvigorating virtually all sectors of the local economy. Let's look at specific examples ...

- In the real estate market -- defaults and foreclosures have dropped and home prices are rising.
- Regarding consumer spending -- across all cities in SLO County, spending is growing with considerably higher taxable sales compared to our state and other coastal counties. This speaks to our county's strength as a whole.
- Taxable receipts from businesses increased by 53% in 2013, versus only 7% statewide.
- Of note is that our county's leisure/hospitality, agricultural and retail sectors have become increasingly intertwined with the wine regions of the county. For example, both Paso Robles and the South County are now spotlighted as destinations on the state and national levels ... with both regions contributing to our county's thriving economy overall. The leisure/hospitality sector alone employs 16,000 people, many of which are head-of-household jobs.
- Next -- construction of residential real estate is expanding. Home prices are rising. In the way SLO County currently goes about its business, expectations for the residential market is extremely positive.

So how does all of this relate to the Phillips 66 Rail Terminal Project? We totally respect the contributions of their Nipomo refinery in terms of its 140 jobs, taxes, ongoing support of activities such as sports teams, and the past good will they've developed.

However, we suggest that the economic life and reputation of our county is not dependent on the Phillips 66 Rail Project being approved. That is -- our economic well being is not dependent on 1.5 mile-long trains laden with dangerous crude oil crossing our entire county 260 times each year.

Our economic lives are dependent more on fundamental industries such as leisure & hospitality, agriculture, retail and real estate. It's dependent on the contributions of local businesses. It's not dependent on satisfying the corporate objectives set by Phillips' executives in Houston ... executives who wish to vastly expand their profits via a "crude-by-rail" strategy.

What's the bottom line? We suggest that our county's economy, continued growth, high quality of life, desirability, and natural beauty, will be seriously jeopardized by bringing in 20,800 tank cars of crude oil by rail, year after year. At the very least, our economic health will be in peril, let alone our lives. The solution - rejection of the Phillips Rail Terminal project.

### **B-9. Project Approval Would Renounce The Pledges Made By Our Government To SLO County Citizens**

SLO County's government Website affirms its primary Vision as having "a responsible and caring community - safe, resilient and healthy."

This is confirmed by the government's stated primary Mission - to "ensure that safety and basic human needs are met for the people of San Luis Obispo County."

And the headline on the cover of SLO County's 2103 Annual Report states that "*San Luis Obispo County is a safe, healthy, livable, prosperous, and well-governed community.*"

The annual report also indicates - "*We assume responsibility for our actions and follow through on our commitments.*"

If the Phillips Rail Terminal Project is approved, thereby endorsing the delivery of a half-billion gallons of crude by rail each year, those pledges will have been violated and renounced.

The citizens of SLO County would be subject to a reversal of "safety", "health" and "caring." A Pandora's box of potential disasters and pollution would have been let loose in our county.

And then, we would be facing the task of "mitigating" the outcomes that should never have been introduced in the first place. Our citizens are counting on County leaders to live up to their pledges.

## B-10. Nipomo Mesa Residents --

### "Good Neighbors", Contributing Their Time & Effort To Help SLO County Citizens In Need

Many citizens obviously oppose the Rail Terminal Project. Nevertheless, we appreciate the good works that Phillips has done over the years, and understand the good will it has earned for those efforts.

Similarly, for the record, residents of the Nipomo Mesa are just as conscious about the need to give back to SLO County. And their efforts go far beyond contributing money. Even more meaningfully, they invest their personal time and energy to improve people's lives. Yet, because these residents go about their activities quietly, they do not get the publicity they deserve.

There are many such groups on the Mesa, from the Rotary Club to the Lions. But let's take just one example -- the Trilogy Service Club. This group is made up of 70 men and women who work to meet the needs of local nonprofits. They do it by fundraising and volunteering for hands-on projects. And their efforts benefit people throughout all of SLO and northern Santa Barbara Counties.

The Service Club is now in its fifth year of good works. Let's look at a few of its accomplishments ...

- Its annual **Fashion Show** has benefited nonprofits such as: "Relay For Life" (fundraisers to fight cancer); "The Rancho Nipomo Dana Adobe Children's Program" (educates 1,200 children a year on local culture); and "Captive Hearts of Grover Beach" (helps men and women rehabilitate themselves).
- Then there's the Club's annual **Harvesting Hope Festival**, which has benefited nonprofits such as the "Five Cities Homeless Coalition."
- And there's the annual **Black & White Ball**, which has helped support the "SLO Noor Foundation" (provides free healthcare to uninsured people). The Ball has also aided "Domestic Violence Solutions" (offering safe shelter to battered women and children).

With just those three events, by the end of 2014, the Trilogy Service Club will have raised approximately \$150,000 to enable nonprofits to continue their good work. And every dime was raised through tens of thousands of hours' worth of sweat and effort by Club members.

Plus, Service Club members travel to and work at organizations throughout SLO County, such as the St. Barnabus Thrift Store, the Children's Resource Network, the Nipomo Food Basket, Womenade, AG Hospital, the SLO County Literacy Council, Ombudsman in Santa Maria, and more.

And - this represents only a fraction of the good works done by the many organizations on the Nipomo Mesa, on behalf of California's Central Coast.

What does this good will, or that earned by Phillips, have to do with the County's decision about the Rail Terminal Project? Honestly, there are many organizations that should be recognized for being "good neighbors." However, historical good will should NOT be part of this equation.

The decision should be based only on the future safety and well being of the citizens of SLO County. And it should be based on protecting not only its people, but its assets, such as its reputation as an exceptional place to live, earn, and visit, all of which will be put at serious risk by the Rail Project.

### **B-11. The Need For A SLO County “Oil Projects Cumulative Impact Analysis”**

The number of current and proposed oil-related projects in our region is escalating at a staggering pace. This spans: traditional drilling for crude; unconventional oil extraction such as horizontal drilling and fracking; and, the importation of tar sands oil.

More specifically, SLO County and northern Santa Barbara County projects include:

- Expansion of the Price Canyon oilfield.
- Development of the Huasna Valley oilfield.
- Exploration for oil on Porter Ranch.
- An industry initiative to probe for oil at over 7,700 regional drilling sites.
- Construction of a Rail Terminal at the Phillips 66 refinery for delivery of crude-by-rail.
- And without doubt, additional proposals will be submitted in the near future.

We believe each of these initiatives should not be looked at on their own. Rather than separately evaluating each new proposal involving oil exploration, extraction, transportation, refining and storage, the County should perform a "cumulative impact analysis."

Although “cumulative impacts” have been a consideration for County projects, the Planning Commission has been addressing oil-related proposals individually. There has not been an across-the-board cumulative analysis reflecting the extreme upsurge in oil-related initiatives.

However, taken together, these projects will undoubtedly have serious, cumulative impacts for the entire region. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), cumulative impacts include “*past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects*”, which “*when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.*”

Therefore, we strongly recommend a moratorium on individual oil project decisions until an in-depth, thoughtful, all-encompassing analysis is conducted and a vision established.