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To: p66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us
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Subject: Time to Protect Our Towns, Reject Oil Train Expansion

Dear San Luis Obispo County Commissioners and Supervisors,

I urge you to deny the proposed oil-by-rail project at the Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery. Bringing tar sands to California will undermine our state's efforts to be a global leader addressing climate change, and these trains will put our communities directly in harm's way.

REP-01

This project must be opposed for several reasons:

1. Emergency responders in my town just aren't prepared for these heavy, dangerous trains and current safety standards won't protect the public. The draft EIR misinforms first responders because it doesn't adequately assess the risks of an oil train disaster; the draft only evaluates rail-accident rates from 2003 to 2012 and spill rates between 2005 and 2009, omitting crucial data about accident frequency and magnitude in 2013 and 2014. This is troubling because we know that more crude spilled from trains in 2013 than during the past four decades combined. The EIR must look at recent data, which reflects the increased quantities of crude being transported in old and unsafe tank cars.

REP-02

2. The EIR's worst-case scenario estimates a spill of 180,000 gallons, or roughly six tank cars of crude. This has to be an error because most crude trains have 100 or more tank cars, carrying millions of gallons. Such a spill could devastate our scarce water resources, sensitive ecosystems, homes and local economies.

REP-03

3. The toxic air emissions that will accompany this project pose an unacceptable risk to public health. In its latest environmental review Phillips 66 admits that its proposed oil train facility will create "significant and unavoidable" levels of air pollution along the rail route, with sulfur dioxide and other toxic chemicals leaked that increase risk of cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease and premature death.

REP-04

4. The EIR has yet to fully analyze the worst-case scenario of a spill near each of the many watersheds crossed en route to the Santa Maria refinery. The proposed route brings oil trains through the San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed and along California's central coast. A derailment near a river, stream, reservoir or aquifer could contaminate drinking water for millions of Californians, an unacceptable risk in this time of extreme drought.

REP-05

5. The planning department must examine the cumulative impacts of the Santa Maria and Rodeo proposals as a single project -- not in isolation -- since the proposed terminal in Santa Maria is directly linked by pipeline to the Phillips 66 refinery in Rodeo. Phillips 66 is proposing to modify both facilities to allow it to refine the most toxic crude oil on Earth: Canadian tar sands.

REP-06

6. Phillips 66 must disclose crude-quality information so decision-makers fully understand the climate impacts of the proposed rail project. At every stage of the mining, transportation and refining process, Canadian tar sands are more carbon intensive than any other source of oil -- making this project simply incompatible with California's plans to be a climate leader.

REP-07

For all these reasons, I urge the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to soundly reject the Phillips 66 proposed rail spur.

REP-08

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