

From: Laurie Litman <[llitman@pacbell.net](mailto:llitman@pacbell.net)>  
To: [P66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:P66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us)  
Date: 11/24/2014 02:03 PM  
Subject: Comments on the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension Project

On behalf of 350 Sacramento, please add the attached comments to the public legal record on the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension Project.

Thank you,  
Laurie Litman

(See attached file: Comments on Phillips 66.docx)



PO Box 161677 • Sacramento, CA 95816 • info@350sacramento.org

November 24, 2014

Murry Wilson  
SLO County Dept. of Planning and Building  
976 Osos Street, Room 200  
San Luis Obispo, 93408

Re: Comments on the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension Project

Dear Mr. Wilson,

Please add these comments on behalf of 350 Sacramento to the public legal record on the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension Project.

350 Sacramento is a local grassroots nonprofit organization working to address the threat of climate change. We are concerned about the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Project and the increasing numbers of crude oil trains coming through Sacramento for numerous reasons: in the short term these trains pose a great danger to the safety of thousands of people in our city and in the long term the oil they pose an even greater danger to the people of Sacramento and the world by exacerbating climate change.

We ask you to reject the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Project for numerous reasons, all related to the dangers posed to the people, wildlife, and the environment affected by this project. These oil trains are extremely dangerous, as evidenced by the many derailments, fires, and spills that have occurred in the last few years. Even without spills they generate toxic emissions and greenhouse gas emissions that are unacceptable.

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Tar sands are the dirtiest of crude oils. The danger of spills especially threatens our waterways as the bitumen sinks within hours to the bottom where it cannot be retrieved, while the added toxic diluents evaporate and cause toxic air pollution. Accidents can result in explosions depending on the particular diluents used to make the bitumen fluid enough to pour into tank cars. Tar sands are an intense carbon source, and gives off more greenhouse gas emissions than other oils. It also burns with high levels of sulfur dioxide. One byproduct is petroleum coke, which is left uncovered so particles can become airborne. Pet coke is too toxic to be allowed to burn in the U.S., but it is sold to China where it is burned in our shared atmosphere anyway.

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Oil trains create toxic air pollution every mile they travel in California. This is not just a problem for SLO, but for every community the trains pass through. The report admits that:

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- (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.
- (AQ.5): Operational activities of trains along the mainline rail route associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate toxic emissions that exceed thresholds.
- (AQ.6): Operational activities associated with the Rail Spur Project would generate GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions that exceed SLOCAPCD thresholds.

It is unethical to approve something that worsens our health up and down the rail line.

For Sacramento, the SLO rail spur adds the impact of two trains moving through our community daily. Both the 100 cars to Benicia and the 80 cars to SLO will return each day, as well. This is the 5th train planned through our city. The cumulative impacts of the shift to crude-by-rail transport must be taken into account. The decision of one Board of Supervisors can negatively impact uprail communities all the way to the borders of California and to the source of the crude. We all live with the threat of more trains as California moves toward importing 25% of its crude by rail (CA Energy Commission projection). This critical decision reaches way beyond SLO County!

Our waterways are very vulnerable. Trains enter California by one of three routes, all of which include “high hazard” rail sections, according to Office of Spill Prevention and Response Map. These include a route south through Dunsmuir (the site of a terrible spill that killed life in the Sacramento River for 35 miles for many years), through the Feather River Canyon with long stretches of rail on high wooden trestles, and over the treacherous Donner Pass and down into Colfax. In addition, California has many untrustworthy old bridges not built to carry 100 heavy tank cars regularly, such as the Carquinez Bridge at Benicia. Add to this California’s seismic instability from earthquake faults along the routes—these are important reasons to avoid oil train deliveries in the region.

In Sacramento, the trains go by and over the American River. This water body is priceless; an oil spill would have devastating consequences. As mentioned earlier, a spill of toxic tar sands into the Kalamazoo River has still not been cleaned up after 3 years and over \$1 billion dollars spent. California is in a drought and cannot afford the risk of a spill from even one of these trains, which could destroy the water supply for millions of people. The effects of such a spill on wildlife would be equally disastrous.

Given the record of the past 18 months, there is no doubt that it's simply a matter of time before another oil spill and tragedy. The cumulative effects of the increase in oil trains through our community increases the all the threats exponentially through increased traffic on the rails, increased wear on the rails, increased chance of derailments, increased risk of collisions with people or vehicles, etc.

There are ways to make oil trains less dangerous—more frequent inspection of rail tracks and bridges, slower speeds, higher standard tank cars, removal of the more volatile chemicals before transport, safer routes that avoid waterways and populated areas, Positive Train Control, etc.—but none of these safeguards have been implemented or guaranteed. We assert that all safety measures and guarantees must in place *before* this or any new project is allowed to go forward.

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But safety measures are not enough to protect people and the environment. Each oil train travels by and through countless communities, waterways, and other precious and sensitive habitat. Each oil train endangers millions of people and thousands of miles as it travels from point of extraction to the refineries in the Bay Area. In Sacramento alone, a quarter of a million people live within a mile of the train tracks. Each train is playing Russian roulette with all the communities and the environment from the extraction site to the refinery.

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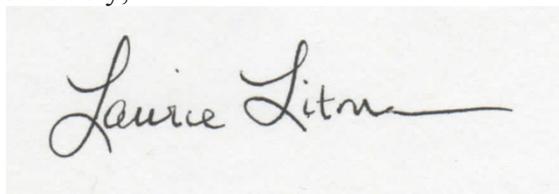
Even if there are no derailments or spills, the effects of the oil being transported through our communities will still cause immense suffering. The cumulative effects of the oil trains from the Phillips 66 Rail Spur Extension and the other projects in the planning stages for Bay Area refineries and other locations in California will exacerbate climate change to the point of no return. According to the latest IPCC report, we are already experiencing the effects of climate change; extreme weather, sea level rise, droughts, floods, extinctions, etc. will continue to increase and worsen. The tar sands and other oils being transported in these trains do our communities no good and much harm.

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 the REIR and the increase in greenhouse gas emissions of this project are found to exceed acceptable thresholds. California has set commendable goals for greenhouse gas reduction through AB32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act. As a State, we have lowered our carbon emissions significantly. These oil trains are going in the wrong direction. They will increase our carbon emissions and slow efforts to convert to renewable energy and address climate change; this is the direction we must go if we are to have a livable planet.

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The IPCC has stated we have to stay within 2°C of temperature increase to avoid the worst of climate change. To do this we need to keep approximately 80% of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground. We need courageous elected officials who are willing to step up and make a difference. Please reject the Phillips 66 Railspur Proposal because of its extreme threat to the planet, future generations, and all we hold dear.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Litman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Laurie Litman  
President, 350 Sacramento