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Date: 11/24/2014 02:37 PM  
Subject: REJECT Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Project - Tar  
Sands Action SoCal

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Please receive the attached comment letter on the Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Project into the public record on behalf of Tar Sands Action Southern California, South Bay 350 Climate Action Group, Burbank Green Alliance and Wild Heritage Planners. Text of the letter is also copied below.

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Tar Sands Action So Cal is a co-founding member of the Southern California Climate Action Coalition 350, affiliated with the national climate change organization 350.org. We are the region's largest clean energy coalition, with over 100 participating organizations, including environmental justice, social justice, labor, youth, environmental, business, and community groups. Through collaboration, SoCal 350 aims to mobilize, support, and strengthen the efforts of different organizations and community members working toward solutions to dirty fuel dependence and who are battling the effects of global-warming-caused climate disruption.

(See attached file: Reject Phillips 66 Santa Maria Rail Project - Tar Sands Action - Jack Eidt.pdf)

# SoCal against Tar Sands



## TAR SANDS ACTION SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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November 24, 2014

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San Luis Obispo, California 93408

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### **Re: REJECT Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Project**

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Tar Sands Action Southern California is an all-volunteer, grassroots organization dedicated to advocacy for clean renewable energy alternatives that wean us off dangerous extreme fossil fuel extraction, transportation, storage, and refining projects in Southern California as well as the state and nation. These moves put at risk the health and safety of our California neighborhoods, the sustainability of our ecosystems, and the stability of our global climate. We are a co-founding member of the SoCal 350 Climate Action Coalition. Along with coalition member South Bay 350 Climate Action Group, we are affiliated with the national climate change advocate 350.org. Burbank Green Alliance is a Southern California organization dedicated to community and sustainability and Wild Heritage Planners specializes in urban and environmental planning centered on the principles of ecology.

The SoCal 350 Climate Action Coalition organized an event last March 1st where over 100 organizations and almost a thousand activists came out in the streets of the Port of Los Angeles calling for clean energy solutions instead of enabling new infrastructure in service to extreme fossil fuel extraction. With the goals of our dedicated supporters and activists in mind, we are writing to voice our strong opposition to the proposed Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Project. The project would put the health and safety of

communities in Southern California and throughout the state in danger, presenting significant and unacceptable risks to our water, air and climate.

### **Emergency Responders**

First and foremost, emergency responders are not prepared for these heavy, dangerous trains and current safety standards will not protect the public. First responders must be trained to deal with an increasing epidemic of oil train disasters across North America. First responders need to know up front what materials are being shipped through their jurisdictions and have sufficient response plans in place. While large shipments of Bakken shale oil must be identified, there is no requirement to disclose the type of crude and its properties. Thick, viscous tar sands oil, as the recent massive spills in Marshall, Michigan and Mayflower, Arkansas have demonstrated it is much more toxic and difficult to clean up than conventional crude. Training and information sharing with local emergency response personnel should be paid for by the industry, using a fee or assessment.

TAR-01

With regards to small loads of under 1 million gallons first responders are “running blind,” meaning not informed whether hazardous, potentially explosive, Bakken Shale oil are inside the tank cars. A single tanker car carries 30,000 gallons of potentially explosive and toxic crude oil. That’s significantly more than most US fire departments can fight, and enough crude oil to permanently damage rivers, wild areas, and drinking water supplies. Small loads should be disclosed to police and fire departments as well.

Rail Accident Data Omitted. The recirculated draft EIR dangerously misinforms first responders because it does not adequately assess the risks of an oil train disaster. It's analysis of potential accidents and spills is flawed because it only evaluates rail accident rates from 2003 to 2012 and spill release rates between 2005 and 2009, and omits important data about crude rail accident frequency and magnitude in 2013 and 2014. This is troubling because we know that more crude spilled from trains in 2013 than spilled during the past four decades. The EIR must look at recent data, including accident data from Canada which has also experienced increased crude by rail incidents. This data reflects the increased quantities of dangerous crude being transported in old and unsafe tank cars and will provide a more accurate assessment of accident risk and magnitude along the rail lines that would serve this project.

TAR-02

Moreover, the EIR's worst case scenario spill analysis estimates a spill of approximately 180,000 gallons, that is approximately six tank cars of crude. This must be an error because according to our studies from ForestEthics, most crude trains are comprised of 100 or more tank cars. Indeed, a worst case scenario spill would be on the order of millions of gallons of crude. Such a spill could devastate our scarce water resources, property and our local economy, and would pose a significant threat to public health and safety. This project cannot be approved without analyzing and mitigating its true impacts.

## **Air Quality Impacts**

Additionally, the toxic air emissions resulting from the Phillips 66 project pose an unacceptable risk to public health, with high levels of toxic air emissions that will impact California communities. Volatile toxic chemicals leak out of tank cars into the air poisoning communities along rail routes. In its latest environmental review Phillips 66 admits that its proposed oil train facility will create “significant and unavoidable” levels of air pollution, including toxic sulfur dioxide and cancer-causing chemicals. The report cites increased health risks -- particularly for children and the elderly -- of cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease, and premature death.

Crude oil produced from Canadian tar sands is one of the world's dirtiest and most environmentally destructive sources of fuel. A diluting agent is typically mixed with the semisolid bitumen from tar sands to allow it to be moved into and out of railcars and through pipelines. Though the specific content of the diluting agents is proprietary information, most formulations include natural gas liquid condensate containing volatile hydrocarbons such as benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene and xylene (Source: NRDC).

TAR-03

The transport of diluted bitumen involves a multistage process which can include pipelines, barges and loading and unloading railcars. During transfers between transportation mechanisms, there is an increased likelihood that vapors will be released from the diluted bitumen, putting workers at particular risk. The diluting agent, which evaporates quickly, contributes to greater unplanned, or fugitive emissions, of highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals during loading, transport, and unloading than would be the case with conventional oil.

Refinery emissions. When diluted tar sands crude oils arrive at U.S. refineries, they bear little similarity to conventional crude oils. Not only does the bitumen portion of the diluted mixture contain 102 times more copper, 11 times more nickel, and 5 times more lead than conventional crude oils, but the added diluting agent contains high concentrations of hazardous pollutants such as benzene (Source: NRDC). All of these chemicals may be released as air pollutants during the refining process. Vapor or "fugitive" emissions may escape through leaks in piping and equipment throughout the refining process, and the presence of highly volatile diluting agents makes it likely that more carcinogenic pollutants will be released into the air. In addition, tar sands crudes require greater use of heaters, boilers, hydro-treating, and cracking, which are likely to increase emissions of toxic and smog- and soot-forming air pollutants. These pollutants have been tied to increased cancer risks, increased respiratory issues including asthma, cardiovascular illness, developmental delays, and other negative health effects.

TAR-04

Noxious odors. In addition to toxic air pollutants, tar sands bitumen contains as much as 11 times more sulfur than conventional crude oils; diluted bitumen contains even higher levels due to the presence of sulfur compounds in diluting agents. Diluted bitumen from the tar sands also has notably high levels of certain sulfur compounds called mercaptans, which are highly volatile and produce strong odors at very low concentrations. Mercaptans have also been linked to central nervous system problems and can irritate the

TAR-05

eyes, skin, and upper respiratory system. Due to the extreme volatility of mercaptans, experts have found it likely that they could be released, along with other highly volatile compounds, during the refining of crude oil.

TAR-05  
(cont.)

### **Crude By Rail Accidents and Water Resources**

Moreover, as noted above, the EIR must fully analyze the potential worst-case scenario of a spill near each of the many watersheds crossed en route to the Santa Maria refinery. The proposed rail route brings oil trains through the San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed and along California's treasured central coast. California has a high risk for catastrophic accidents because many of its 5,000 to 7,000 railroad bridges are over 100 years old and are not routinely inspected by any state or federal agency, and the rail lines run through "hazard areas" such as earthquake faults and densely populated cities. Millions of Californians live near crude by rail routes and could face extreme safety risks.

TAR-06

The average oil train carries more than three million gallons of explosive, toxic crude oil. A derailment near a river, stream, reservoir, or above a groundwater aquifer could contaminate drinking water for millions of Californians. During a time of extreme drought, San Luis Obispo County must not approve this project and create contamination risk for the rest of our state.

### **Phillips 66 Santa Maria and Rodeo Projects Connected**

The San Luis Obispo County planning department must examine the Santa Maria and Rodeo proposals as a single project. It is clear that Phillips 66 wants to bring toxic Canadian tar sands to California. The proposed oil train terminal in Santa Maria is linked by pipeline to the Phillips 66 refinery in Rodeo, CA. Phillips 66 is proposing to modify these facilities to allow it to refine the toxic Canadian tar sands. Transporting and refining tar sands, as noted above, will create more toxic air and water pollution for families along the rail line and near the Santa Maria refinery. San Luis Obispo cannot approve this project in isolation.

TAR-07

### **Climate Impacts: Crude Quality Full Disclosure**

Finally, Phillips 66 must disclose crude quality information referred to above in order for decision makers to fully understand the climate impacts of the proposed rail project. Tar sands means more carbon pollution: At every stage of the mining, transportation, and refining process, Canadian tar sands are more carbon intensive than any other source of oil. Bringing tar sands to California will undermine the state's efforts to be a global leader addressing climate disruption.

TAR-08

**We strongly urge the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to reject the Phillips 66 oil train proposal due to its significant, unavoidable, and unnecessary risks to our communities and climate!**

TAR-09

Sincerely,

Jack Eidt  
Organizer  
Tar Sands Action Southern California

Joe Galliani  
Organizer  
South Bay 350 Climate Action Group

Jessica Aldridge  
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