From: Heidi Harmon <sacredheart9395@yahoo.com>
To: "p66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us"
<p66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us>, Mecham Frank
<fmecham@co.slo.ca.us>, Arnold Debbie <darnold@co.slo.ca.us>,
Caren Ray <cray@co.slo.ca.us>, Adam Hill <ahill@co.slo.ca.us>,
Bruce Gibson <bgibson@co.slo.ca.us>
Date: 11/25/2014 11:08 AM
Subject: Proposed Oil Train Project in Our Community Should be Stopped

Proposed Oil Train Project in Our Community Should be Stopped

The revision of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) regarding the proposed rail spur at the Nipomo Mesa Refinery has just come out and it acknowledges the existence of additional Class I air quality risks. It demonstrates that the county faces significant air pollution risks that cannot be mitigated.

Several California refineries are gearing up to handle volatile Bakken shale oil and sulfurous Alberta bitumen. This scramble is already increasing the toxic industrial blight to Bay Area locations. Now this blight is being brought to a location in SLO County that was planned and promoted to be free of undue visual, sonic and chemical pollution. HAH-01

The 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 DEIR acknowledges that the Cuesta Grade could be subject to a runaway train event (4.11-23). A runaway train could end up spilling its load and possibly burning in or near the city of San Luis Obispo. HAH-02

Hydrocarbon deposits are abundant in the Alberta tar sands region and bitumen will be extracted for many years to come. In approving this project, the County would be making a long-term commitment to a lower quality of life and a significant risk of catastrophic damage.Ignoring the scientific consensus on climate change is the supreme folly of our time.
Further investments in high-intensity fossil fuel extraction make a mockery of California's leadership position in reducing greenhouse gas pollution. HAH-03

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue, Heidi Harmon

=-=-=-

HAH-01	The RDEIR addresses the potential impacts and recommends mitigation measures for the proposed Project consistent with the requirements of CEQA. Section 4.3 (Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases) addresses GHG emissions and health risks. The commenter's statement about air issues are included in the FEIR for the decision-makers' consideration as part of the County's deliberations on the proposed project.
HAH-02	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. The Rail Spur Project would use two additional locomotives (for a total of five locomotives) on the crude oil unit train for crossing the Cuesta Grade. These two additional locomotives would be added to the train at Santa Margarita and removed from the train in the City of San Luis Obispo once the train had crossed the Cuesta Grade. These additional locomotives would help to assure that the train can safely traverse the Cuesta Grade.
HAH-03	The RDEIR states that GHG emissions associated with crude oil transportation by rail would produce significant and unavoidable impacts. Emissions can be offset through the use of emissions offsets, as are available from a number of different sources for GHG. However, as indicated in Section 4.3, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases, of the RDEIR, it is uncertain if Air Districts could require GHG offsets due to Federal preemption and the impacts associated with the GHG emissions would remain significant and unavoidable. The refining of the different crude slate associated with this project would not produce different GHG emissions at the SMR than the normal range of crude oils refined at the SMR. GHG emissions are attributable to removal of the heavier ends, such as at the SMR, and associated with the cracking and formulation of lighter ends, such as gasoline, at the Rodeo Refinery. These activities would be within the range of normal activities at each refinery. The main difference in GHG emissions occurs at the extraction point, where extracting the tar sands generally produces substantially higher GHG per bbl of crude oil than conventional methods, depending on the level of associated gas and the use of that gas. Some fields in California for example, extract the crude oil and just burn the associated gas in flares, which actually can produce a higher GHG intensity than even Canadian Tar Sands crude oils. The additional GHG emissions associated with mining the tar sands would occur no matter the destination of the crude oil, whether the crude oil is destined for the SMR, or other locations within the U.S. Current CARB requirements (LCFS) already require refineries to disclose the carbon intensities of the crude oil they refine.