

From: Sandy Simon <sandysimon2010@gmail.com>
To: p66-railspur-comments@co.slo.ca.us
Date: 11/15/2014 11:07 AM
Subject: P66 Rail Terminal Projects - Comments on revised DEIR

Mr. Murry Wilson, SLO County Planning Department Dear Mr. Wilson:

I am opposed to the Phillips 66 rail spur extension project for the following reasons:

Moving oil by rail down Cuesta Grade through San Luis Obispo County is dangerous and potentially devastating to our County's residents' lives and economic well-being. Moving 400 tank cars a week down the dangerous Cuesta Grade could potentially and inevitably inflict serious harm to the quality of life throughout our County. Cuesta Grade is a very mountainous area with an extremely steep pass (7% slope).

The DOT-111 rail cars which Phillips would use to carry flammable oil to the Nipomo Mesa refinery are particularly unsafe and are the same cars which were used by MMA in the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster of July 6, 2013, the deadliest rail accident in Canada since 1864. All 72 cars on the train derailed on a sharp curve, crashed and exploded, killing 47 people and flattening the center of town. Many of the 47 people killed were vaporized by the intense heat and explosion of the train which broke loose and rolled downhill into the town. The center of town was flattened.

SIM-01

Similarly, just outside of Casselton, North Dakota, in December 2013, a freight train derailed, crashing into a mile-long crude oil train. Thirty tank cars exploded. A huge fireball and plumes of black smoke shot skyward, and 400,000 gallons of crude oil spilled out of the tank cars. Once again, the train consisted of DOT-111 rail cars.

Cuesta Grade is steep, with sharp turns, making it an unsuitable and dangerous way to carry 11,632 ton trains. Having 260 fully-loaded, 1.5 mile-long trains entering San Luis Obispo County each year going down Cuesta Grade is a devastating accident waiting to happen.

San Luis Obispo County depends on tourism for much of the livelihood of its residents. Our economic lives are bound up in fundamental industries such as leisure and hospitality, agriculture, retail and real estate to which local businesses in particular contribute. The County's economy, continued growth, high quality of life, desirability and natural beauty would be seriously jeopardized by bringing in 20,800 tank cars of crude oil by rail, year after year. In addition, should there be a derailment on the 25+ mile journey down Cuesta Grade to the Nipomo Mesa refinery, hundreds of thousands of lives will potentially be put at risk.

SIM-02

The population of the flattened town of Lac-Mégantic was 5,932. San Luis Obispo County's population is 275,000, with an additional 31,000 college students living in the County. The possible cost to the County and its residents of a train wreck carrying highly volatile crude oil in DOT-111 tank cars, which have been involved in most or all of the previous derailments, explosions, fires and oil spill, should prohibit this project from ever being approved.

SIM-03

Sincerely,
Sandy Simon
Sandy Simon
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Responses to Sandy Simon Comments

SIM-01	The FEIR addressed the Cuesta Grade area specifically in terms of accident rates. The EIR concluded that the impacts from a spill would be significant and unavoidable.
SIM-02	CEQA does not require an evaluation of economic or social impacts, and states that “economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment” unless those effects result in physical changes to the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15131). Although the Project, and particular a major spill or fire, could affect the local economy and tourism, these effects would not constitute or cause a physical change in the environment above those already described and discussed in the RDEIR.
SIM-03	The FEIR addressed the SLO Area specifically utilizing site specific population densities and the level of populations located in close proximity to the railroad tracks. Using a detailed quantitative risk methods, the EIR concluded that the impacts from a spill would be significant and unavoidable.