

REACH

Ideas + Action for a Thriving Central Coast

May 6, 2024

Susan Strachan
San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building
976 Osos St., Rm 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Subject: REACH Comments on Phillips 66 Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms. Strachan:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Demolition and Remediation Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

By way of background, REACH is a nonprofit, economic impact organization with a mission to increase economic prosperity on the Central Coast of California through big thinking, bold action and regional collaboration. The north star of our work is collaboration with business, education, government and nonprofit partners to create 15,000 good paying jobs in the region by 2030 and establish the Central Coast as a place where current and future generations have the opportunity to thrive.

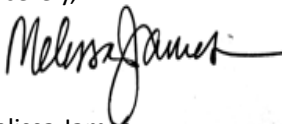
Supporting the region's economic resilience through the energy transition — including as sites like the Phillips 66 Santa Maria refinery have closed down — has been a key pillar of our regional work. The REACH 2030 plan, our guiding blueprint for regional action, seeks to grow a number of high-wage industries on the Central Coast to counteract these challenges, including in aerospace, defense, precision manufacturing, and cleantech among others. Through development of the recent Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, a key challenge identified by employers in these fields is the lack of available industrial and commercial sites, which has served as a key constraint on job growth in the region.

The Santa Maria Refinery site is a critical economic asset to the Central Coast. As one of the few and largest industrial zoned sites in the area, reuse of the site will help address a key economic pain point identified in the CEDS process that is constraining economic opportunity. There is already strong interest from potential future users in repurposing this site to retain its role as a long-standing economic and jobs center for the region.

Importantly, the site will retain vital economic assets that will help ensure it can remain an engine for jobs and economic activity. We appreciate that the draft EIR identifies important infrastructure and utilities that will remain that may be of value to future users, such as hardscapes, rail spurs, an electrical substation and powerline and telecommunication line, a wastewater outfall line, among various other pieces of infrastructure. This is critical to enable site readiness and reuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important asset for our region.

Sincerely,



Melissa James
President/CEO
REACH