

CITY of CARPINTERIA, CALIFORNIA

April 7, 2015

San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission
c/o James A. Bergmann, Director of Planning and Building
976 Los Osos Street, Room 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408



Re: Request for denial of the proposed Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Spur Extension Project

Dear Chair and Commissioners:

As Mayor of the City of Carpinteria, I write to you on behalf of the Carpinteria City Council to request that the Planning Commission deny the proposed Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery Rail Spur Extension Project due to the 11 Significant and Unavoidable (Class I) environmental impacts, identified in the project draft environmental impact report (DEIR). In particular, we object to the project due to the increased risk of a crude oil train derailment in our community.

Carpinteria is located on the coast in southeast Santa Barbara County and is bisected by the Union Pacific Railroad mainline studied in the DEIR and subject to project impacts. Thousands of Carpinterians live, work and go to school adjacent to this rail line. An oil train derailment in Carpinteria poses a significant risk of loss of life in our community.

Carpinteria is home to a variety of coastal resources that are of regional and statewide significance include an estuary, near shore ocean reefs, a harbor seal haulout/sanctuary, popular tourist destinations such as the Carpinteria downtown shopping district and the Carpinteria State Beach campground. All of these important resources are located adjacent to the UPRR railroad tracks and, in the event of an oil train derailment in Carpinteria, would put these resources at a significant risk of being damaged or destroyed.

As you know, in its letter of November 24, 2014, UPRR takes the position that federal regulations preempt local government agencies such as the San Luis Obispo County from regulating railroad operations. Yet, the regulation of rail transportation, as promulgated and carried out by the rail industry and federal regulatory agencies has proven to be inadequate to effectively address the risks represented by oil-by-rail transportation. Nationwide, the lack of effective federal or state regulations and the inability to establish local regulations has resulted in a dangerous void in oversight with, as we have seen over and over again, disastrous results. This inadequate system of regulatory oversight, the threat of federal preemption, and the posture of UPRR concerning the establishment of project mitigation or conditions that may be deemed to affect railroad operations make clear that the significant environmental impacts identified cannot be adequately addressed.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the Commission deny the proposed Phillips 66 Santa Maria Refinery project.

Sincerely,

Gregg A. Carty
Mayor

c: San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
California Coastal Commission