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August 25, 2015

Department of Planning and Building
San Luis Obispo County
976 Osos Street, Room 300
San Luis Obispo, California 93408
Attn: Ryan Hostetter

Re: Opposing Transportation of Crude Oil

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The Albany Unified School District Board of Education would like to state our concerns regarding the expansion of the Phillips 66 oil train offloading facility in San Luis Obispo County. Our district is located in western Alameda County with a major railroad transport route in proximity to many schools and the residences of many students and their families. Almost all of our schools are in the zone designated by the Department of Transportation as a potential impact and evacuation route in the case of a rail accident on this route.

The Board has been informed that the most significant impact identified in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR) for this project is an increase in accidents on the main rail line that could result in oil spills, fires, and explosions. This is not just a theoretical risk—there have been at least five train derailments in western Alameda County in the past 15 years. Should the Phillips 66 permit be granted, then Albany USD would have to expend valuable time and scarce resources preparing for the potential impact of the derailment of an oil train, not to mention the impossibility of preventing deaths and injuries in the case of an explosion close to one of our schools.

The current rail system—which runs through several high-population-density urban school districts in Richmond and Alameda Counties—is not designed to move large quantities of hazardous materials such as crude oil. Additionally, we are concerned about an increase in diesel emissions near our schools. Alameda County already has a higher incidence of childhood asthma than the average for California. The Board believes that this project would directly threaten the health and safety of our school communities.

On August 25, 2015, by a vote of 5 to 0, the Albany Unified School District Board of Education voted to respectfully request that the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission vote to deny this project.

Sincerely,

Ron Rosenbaum
President, Board of Education

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