

Sue Kibbe, Benicia resident

Comments at Benicia Planning Commission Meeting July 10, 2014

Questions for Benicia City Planning Commission and Valero

Impact 4.1-2:

1. An **unmitigated, significant and unavoidable air quality violation, with a net increase in Nitrogen oxides and ozone precursor emissions** would result from transporting crude by rail through the communities up-rail within the Sacramento Basin: in the Yolo-Solano, Sacramento Metropolitan and Placer County Air Quality Management Districts.
2. I ask you: How can we, in good conscience -- or even legally -- violate the air quality of our neighbors to the north by authorizing these shipments? And not only would we affect their air quality, but we would authorize the transport of a highly toxic, corrosive, flammable material in 36, 500 tank cars each weighing 143-tons when loaded with crude oil, an annual total of 730 locomotives weighing over 7,150 tons each, through these communities, over rails that were never built for and have never carried such heavy traffic -- all for the sole purpose of satisfying human greed?
3. Valero's net income rose 28% in the first quarter of 2014, net income to shareholders jumped to 828 million, revenues rose to 33.6 billion. If you are telling me that Valero needs this project in order to stay competitive, you haven't looked at the facts.

Source: <http://fuelfix.com/blog/2014/04/29/valeros-profit-soars-on-better-fuel-margins>

Section 4.6.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

I'd like to address one of the "benefits" -- much proclaimed by Valero -- from this project.

Valero states that crude-by-rail would "improve air quality in the Bay Area." They are not lying -- this is a carefully worded deception. First, take a look at the "Bay Area Air Quality Management District." This is a huge area encompassing every county that touches the Bay, the entirety of every county except for Sonoma and Solano counties. This is the area in which they can legally claim to improve the air quality.

The mitigating factor here is the reduced number of oil tankers traversing the Bay. What they calculated were the emissions from 72 ships that will no longer be sailing across 49.5 miles -- from the Sea Buoy outside the Golden Gate to the Valero dock in Benicia -- and back out again. (That's 99 miles x 72 tankers.) They were allowed to subtract those Bay Area emissions from the direct emissions that will be generated right here from construction of the rail terminal, unloading crude oil and 730 locomotive engines moving through the Industrial Park.

So this gives Valero a “less than significant” increase in emissions (Table 4.6-5), but in reality, they will be increasing emissions right here where we live and breathe by **18,433 metric tons** per year, while reducing them out in the Bay. This may be legal in terms of the permitting process, and it may be good news for sailboats on the Bay, but for the people of Benicia and especially for any business located in the Industrial Park, it is a terrible deal.

What people need to understand is that this “mitigation” in the “Bay Area” has been used to offset the very real pollution that will happen right here. That pollution is not reduced by one particle, except on paper. To tell us that this is a “benefit” to Benicia is hugely hypocritical and a manipulation of the facts. Do not be deceived. Know that the pollution in this city will increase as a result of crude by rail, and the “mitigation” out there in the Bay actually works against us. And if you have a business in the Industrial Park, you will be in the thick of it.

“Job Creation” -- one of the “benefits” to the community from crude-by-rail

The addition of 20 full-time jobs at the refinery will be the result of switching from crude by vessel to rail delivery. There will be 72 fewer vessel deliveries, in which crude is pumped directly from the ship at the dock into pipes and storage tanks, one operation. Instead, there will be 36,500 tank cars per year to be emptied at the refinery, coupling and uncoupling 100 tank cars per day. Let’s be clear, these are HAZMAT jobs. Not only would you be unloading one of the most toxic substances on the planet, breathing in toxic “fugitive emissions” from the tank cars, but also you would be in direct contact with the toxic emissions from 730 locomotives per year. The only thing appealing about these new jobs will be the “good pay” (they are never described as “good jobs”), because they are hazardous, arduous, truly nasty jobs. Would you encourage your son to apply?

Pay attention to the wording

Pay attention to the wording in this proposal: “The Project would not increase the amount of crude oil that **can be processed** at the refinery . . .” It never says, the amount of crude oil that “is being processed” at the refinery. In the document, page 3-2, it says: “The Refinery’s crude oil processing rate is limited to an annual average of 165,000 barrels per day (daily maximum of 180,000 barrels) by its operating permit.” That is a huge increase from the 70,000 barrels per day that it says are processed now. With the 70,000 by rail per day, add 18 vessels shipping 350,000 barrels per vessel = 6,300,000 barrels, total of 31,850,000 barrels per year= an increase in processing and hence, in emissions.

Sue Kibbe

“My heart’s in the Highlands, wherever I go.”