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September 28, 2016

By Email and U.S. Mail

Honorable Mayor Patterson
and City Council Members
City of Benicia
250 East L Street
Benicia, CA 94510



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Re: Valero Crude by Rail Project (12PLN-00063)

Dear Honorable Mayor Patterson and City Council Members:



The undersigned groups submit these proposed findings to the City Council for its consideration.

Sincerely,

 Rachael E. Koss Adams Broadwell Joseph & Cardozo Safe Fuel and Energy Resources California	Ethan Buckner Stand
 Jaclyn H. Prange Staff Attorney Natural Resources Defense Council	Clare Lakewood Center for Biological Diversity

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September 28, 2016
Page 2

Erica Maharg San Francisco Baykeeper	Katherine Black Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
 Roger Lin Communities for a Better Environment	 Devorah Ancel Staff Attorney Sierra Club

REK:ieh

Enclosure

cc: Teresa Olson tolson@ci.benicia.ca.us

RESOLUTION NO. 16-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BENICIA DENYING A USE PERMIT FOR THE VALERO CRUDE BY RAIL PROJECT AT 3400 EAST SECOND STREET (12PLN-00063)

WHEREAS, on December 21, 2012, Valero Refinery requested use permit approval for the Valero Crude by Rail (CBR) Project at 3400 East Second Street; and

WHEREAS, the City of Benicia, as the Lead Agency, prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration to determine if the Valero CBR Project could have a significant impact on the environment, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (14 CCR Section 15000 et seq.), and the City of Benicia California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines pursuant thereto; and

WHEREAS, the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for a 30-day comment period between May 30, 2013 through July 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) was prepared for the Valero CBR Project and circulated for a 90-day comment period between June 17, 2014 through September 15, 2014; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Completion of the Draft EIR was filed with the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) on June 17, 2014, and a public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR was published in the Benicia Herald and Vallejo Time Herald on June 17, 2014; and

WHEREAS, copies of the Draft EIR were provided to the State Clearinghouse (State Clearinghouse No. 2013052074) and to those public agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, and a Notice of Availability to other interested persons and agencies, and the comments of such persons and agencies were sought for a 90-day comment period between the dates of June 17 through September 15, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and accepted testimony on the Draft EIR on July 10, 2014, August 14, 2014 and September 11, 2014, and the City accepted written comments on the Draft EIR through September 15, 2014; and

WHEREAS, a Revised DEIR was prepared for the Valero CBR Project and circulated for a 60-day comment period between August 31, 2015 through

October 30, 2015;and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Completion of the Revised Draft EIR was filed with OPR on August 31, 2015, and a public notice of the availability of the Revised Draft EIR was published in the Benicia Herald and Vallejo Times Herald on August 31, 2015;and

WHEREAS, copies of the Revised Draft EIR were provided to the State Clearinghouse (State Clearinghouse No. 2013052074) and to those public agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, and a Notice of Availability to other interested persons and agencies, and the comments of such persons and agencies were sought for a 60-day comment period between the dates of August 31, 2015 through October 30, 2015;and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and accepted testimony on the Revised Draft EIR on September 29, 2015, September 30, 2015, October 1, 2015 and October 8, 2015, and the City accepted written comments on the Revised Draft EIR through October 30, 2015;and

WHEREAS, 287 written communications were received regarding the Draft EIR, 3,822 written communications were received regarding the Revised Draft EIR and these are included, along with responses, in the Final EIR;and

WHEREAS, the Final EIR document consisting of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Draft EIR, Revised Draft EIR and the Response to Comments; and said Response to Comments incorporated all written comments received, all oral comments made at the Planning Commission public hearings, the responses to those written and oral comments, and the necessary corrections to the Draft EIR;and

WHEREAS, the Response to Comments document was circulated for public information and provided to the Planning Commission on January 5, 2016;and

WHEREAS, agencies and persons commenting on the Draft EIR and Revised Draft EIR were provided with copies of the Response to Comments document or the City's proposed responses to their specific comments on January 5, 2016;and

WHEREAS, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program was prepared to ensure that the mitigation measures identified in the EIR are implemented; and

WHEREAS, the various documents and other materials related to the

Project constitute the Record of Proceedings upon which the City bases its findings and decisions contained herein. Those documents and materials are located in the offices of the custodian of records for the documents and materials, who is the Community Development Director, City Hall, 250 East L Street, Benicia, California; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held public hearings on February 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2016, at which it considered and discussed the Final EIR, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the staff report, and the proposed use permit with conditions of approval for the CBR Project, and heard testimony from members of the public regarding the documents and the proposed use permit; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 16-1 and denied certification of the Final EIR and denied the use permit for the CBR Project on February 11, 2016; and

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2016, Valero Refinery filed a timely appeal of the Planning Commission decision stating that the denial was based on grounds either preempted by federal law, contrary to governing law and/or not supported by substantial evidence in the record; and

WHEREAS, the City Council heard public comment on the appeal and closed the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council continued its deliberation on the appeal to September 20, 2016 to allow Valero to petition the Surface Transportation Board for a declaratory order to address weigh-in on the issue of preemption; and

WHEREAS, ~~a declaratory order by the Surface Transportation Board denied Valero's petition for a declaratory order has not been issued;~~ and

WHEREAS, ~~the Surface Transportation Board's decision confirms the City's position that it is not preempted from denying the use permit; the issue of the City's ability to regulate the public health and safety impacts from the rail operations up rail and locally remains uncertain in light of the federal and state authorities lack of clear guidance or regulations;~~ and

WHEREAS, per Section 15270 of the CEQA Guidelines, CEQA does not apply to projects that a public agency disapproves.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council of the City of Benicia does hereby find that based on the Valero Crude by Rail Project application, the staff report, and related documents, and information presented at the public hearings:

~~1. That because the Surface Transportation Board has not issued a declaratory order or provided other direction in response to the relevant petition, the City Council lacks sufficient information to decide the full extent of the City's regulatory authority to legally impose mitigation measures and conditions on the Project. This results in the Council being unable to make the required findings to approve the Use Permit and to determine if the proposed Environmental Impact Report provides sufficient information to fulfill its function as an informational document for the City Council as the decisionmakers.~~

~~1. That the proposed location of the use is not in accord inconsistent with the objectives of the General Plan and the Benicia Municipal Code and the purposes of the district in which the Crude By Rail site is located, in that:~~

~~While oil & gas refining is an allowed use, it is unclear from the scale of this project how traffic impacts will be mitigated. Public testimony provides that the number of train cars and frequency of the cars will block traffic on Park Road if offloading of the rail cars is delayed. This will back up traffic on Park Road as well as on to the freeway off-ramp which causes an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of traffic accidents. The applicant and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) have stated that trains will not be dispatched until it is clear there is room for the next train; but the City does not appear to have the ability to condition the dispatching of the trains to ensure that trains are not prematurely dispatched, this could result in unavoidable impacts to traffic and safety within the Industrial Park, which is not in accord with Benicia Municipal Code (BMC) Section 17.04.030B, in that the Project has the potential to result in an inharmonious and harmful land use within the Industrial Park.~~

~~a. The pProject could potentially have negative biological and water resources impact on Sulphur Springs Creek and the marsh riparian area between the Benicia Industrial Park and the Carquinez Strait due to a potential spill and on-site risk of accident or upset during operation of the unoffloading facility rack. The unoffloading facility rack is would be owned and operated by Valero, is would be located on Valero's property, and is proposed to be constructed adjacent to Sulphur Springs Creek and the marsh riparian area. There are insufficient mitigation measures that have been applied to protect these areas and it does not appear that there is adequate space to require additional mitigation measures. The risk of potential impacts to the creek is not in accord inconsistent with the overarching goal of the General Plan, which is sustainability. Further, because of the Project's potential to impact the creek, it is would not be inconsistent in accord with Goal 3.22.1 of the General Plan, "Avoid development that will degrade existing lakes and streams."~~

~~On site and up rail impacts such as the potential (however small) for derailments cannot be adequately addressed due to the lack of federal and state regulations. Trains are subject to federal~~

regulations; however, such regulations have not kept pace with the changing environment and are not protective of public health and safety. Measures such as new technology, reduced track speeds and more frequent inspections have not prevented serious accidents.

- b. The Project's offloading facility operation, which is proposed to be located adjacent to existing crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas storage tanks, poses a risk of a catastrophic event that that the proposed location of the conditional use and the proposed conditions under which it would be operated or maintained are not consistent with the general plan and will could be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in or adjacent to the neighborhood of such use, and detrimental to properties or improvements in the vicinity or to the general welfare of the eCity. The risk of a catastrophic event from operation of the offloading facility is inconsistent with Goal 2.5 of the General Plan because it could degrade the health, safety and quality of life in Benicia. Further, the risk of a catastrophic event from operation of the offloading facility is inconsistent with Goal 4.1 and Policy 4.1.1 of the General Plan because it could threaten the safety of the Benicia community. The risk of a catastrophic event from operation of the offloading facility is also inconsistent with Goals 4.7, 4.8 and 4.20 of the General Plan because it fails to protect neighborhoods and sensitive receptors from hazards and hazardous materials. in that the potential (however small) for a catastrophic explosion during the unloading of the tank cars on Valero's tracks on Valero's property is detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the Industrial Park and the greater community, and detrimental to properties and improvements in the vicinity and the general welfare of the city.
- c. The Project could negatively affect air quality and public health during Project construction from nitrogen oxides emissions. The Project could also negatively affect air quality, the climate and public health in Benicia and throughout the region from emissions of reactive organic gases, carbon dioxide and toxic air contaminants during operation of the offloading facility and crude oil storage tanks, and from refinery crude slate changes. Further, the Project's potential negative effects on air quality, the climate and public health from construction, from operation of the offloading facility and crude oil storage tanks, and from crude slate changes is inconsistent with Goals 4.9 and 4.10 of the General Plan because the Project could degrade air quality for Benicia residents and the region.
- d. The Project's proposed offloading facility is located in a FEMA-designated 100-year flood plain. The Project could exacerbate flooding conditions. The Project is inconsistent with Goal 4.13, Policy 4.13.1 and Program 4.13.A of the General Plan because the Project site

is at risk of flooding during the FEMA-designated 100-year base flood. There is also no evidence that the Project will comply with section 15.48.050 of the Municipal Code, which prohibits development in a floodway unless certification by a registered professional engineer or architect demonstrates that the development would not increase flood levels.

e. Section 17.104.060 of the Municipal Code prohibits the City Council from issuing the use permit because, as shown above, the Project could be detrimental to public health, safety and welfare, to properties, local businesses, schools and to the general welfare of the City.

~~2. That the proposed conditional use will not comply with the provisions of this title, including any specific condition required for the proposed conditional use in the district in which it would be located, in that the Project's site development features (proximity to existing oil tanks and Sulphur Springs Creek) and design is not located and operated in a manner that is compatible with uses on adjoining properties and in the surrounding area, as detailed in Findings 1, 2 and 3, above.~~

~~The City Council cannot require adequate conditions for the Project which will mitigate the public health and safety impacts from traffic, potential derailments, oil spill, and explosion, among other impacts.~~

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT based on the above findings, the City Council denies the appeal of Valero of the Planning Commission's decision and denies the use permit for the Crude By Rail project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Benicia's representatives in Congress and the State Legislature shall be contacted by the Interim City Manager on behalf of the Council to urge that they ~~take action to provide clear guidance on the question of preemption and to enact~~ appropriate legislation to provide the

appropriate tool and protection to local governments to enable them to protect public health and safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if the City is sued by Valero, that the City Attorney is directed to contact the various organizations in opposition to the Project to solicit funds to help defend the City.

On motion of Council Member _____, seconded by Council Member _____, the above Resolution is introduced and passed by the City Council of the City of Benicia at a regular meeting of the Council held on the ~~20th day of September, 2016~~ and adopted by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Elizabeth Patterson, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa Wolfe, City Clerk

Date