

*Letter to the editor by Constance Beutel, Benicia Herald, published March 6, 2018*

## **Public health and safety is vital**

I agree with Andrés Soto (“Benicia deserves better,” Letters, Feb. 21) that Benicia deserves better health and safety protection from potentially dangerous industrial mishaps and toxic emissions. For those industries, like Valero, that are proud of their safety record, additional oversight should be welcomed and encouraged for those living within the periphery of their operations.

I recently heard an individual describe what her experience was like in suffering acute asthma attacks. And a neighbor, a retired nurse, spoke of the witnessing patients die of severe respiratory illness. Certainly maintaining the health and safety of citizens is a corporate as well as a civic responsibility.

We know from self-reported data to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) that Valero emits nearly 3 million metric tons of toxins annually (see “CARB, Facility Emissions Report, report year 2012 – Valero Refining Company”). Those emissions are a big part of the air we breathe daily.

Benicia does deserve better and a start toward “better” would be a local Industrial Safety Ordinance and community real-time air quality monitoring that would allow the people most effected by local industrial operations a say in their health and safety.

Constance Beutel, EdD;  
Benicia