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Re: Comments on the Valero Crude By Rail Project DEIR

Dear Mr. Kilger and Ms. Million,

Please add my comments to the public legal record on Valero's Crude By Rail Project and incorporate them as part of the review of its DEIR. *In addition*, please forward my comments to the Planning Commissioners.

350 Sacramento is a local grassroots nonprofit organization working to address the threat of climate change. We are concerned about the increasing numbers of crude oil trains coming through Sacramento for many reasons: in the short term these trains pose a great danger to the safety of thousands of people in our city and in the long term the oil they carry pose an even greater danger to the people of Sacramento and the world.

The DEIR is inadequate in innumerable ways. We support the excellent comments made by SACOG (Sacramento Area Council of Governments) and, without repeating all their arguments, would like to go on record with the same concerns.

- The DEIR fails to consider the risk of fire and explosion as a threshold of significance.
- The Project poses a significant hazard to the public and the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions.
- The Release Rate Analysis is flawed as a tool to assess the potential environmental impacts of the project.
- The DEIR fails to analyze the potential environmental impacts of crude oil transport beyond the Roseville to Benicia alignment.

- The DEIR fails to analyze the cumulative impacts of the project.
- The DEIR improperly conflates its description of the project with measures intended to reduce or avoid the clear impacts of the project.

Additionally, we have many concerns and observations that go beyond those expressed by SACOG. These oil trains are extremely dangerous, as evidenced by the many derailments, fires, and the great tragedy in Lac Megantic. There are ways to make the oil trains less dangerous—more frequent inspection of rail tracks and bridges, slower speeds, higher standard tank cars, removal of the more volatile chemicals before transport, safer routes that avoid waterways and populated areas, Positive Train Control, etc.—but none of these safeguards have been implemented or guaranteed. We assert that all safety measures and guarantees must in place *before* the project is allowed to go forward.

But safety measures are not enough to protect people and the environment. Each oil train goes by countless communities, waterways, and other precious and sensitive habitat. Each oil train endangers millions of people and thousands of miles as it travels from the Bakken oil fields or Canadian tar sands to the refineries in the Bay Area. In Sacramento alone, a quarter of a million people live within a mile of the train tracks, which would be the impact zone in the case of a disaster like that in Lac Megantic. The DEIR neglects to acknowledge that each train is playing Russian roulette with all the communities and the environment from the extraction site to the refinery.

Our waterways are very vulnerable. In Sacramento the trains go by and over the American River. This water body is priceless; we cannot afford an oil spill. A spill of toxic tar sands into the Kalamazoo River has still not been cleaned up after 3 years and over \$1 billion dollars spent. California is in a drought and cannot afford the risk of a spill from one of these trains, which could destroy the water supply for millions of people. The effects of such a spill on wildlife would be equally disastrous and have not been adequately addressed in the DEIR.

Given the record of the past 18 months, there is no doubt that it's simply a matter of time before another oil spill and tragedy. But even if there are no derailments, no fireballs, no more tragedies, the effects of the oil being transported through our communities will still cause immense suffering. The cumulative effects of the oil trains from the Valero Project plus all the other projects in the planning stages for the Bay Area refineries and other locations in California will exacerbate climate change to the point of no return. According to the latest IPCC report, we are already experiencing the effects of climate change and the extreme weather, sea level rise, droughts, floods, extinctions, etc. will continue and worsen. The tar sands and Bakken crude being transported in these oil trains are extreme fossil fuels that require an intensive amount of energy and cause toxic pollution in their extraction and processing. These are all significant cumulative effects that have not been adequately addressed in the DEIR, especially given their extreme risk to the planet and all we hold dear.

California has set commendable goals for greenhouse gas reduction through AB32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act. As a state, we have lowered our carbon emissions significantly. These oil trains are going in the wrong direction. They will increase our carbon emissions and slow our efforts to convert to renewable energy and to address climate change. That is the direction we must go if we are to have a livable

planet. The DEIR must address how the increase in oil trains will affect the goals of AB32.

The DEIR fails to provide an adequate No Action alternative. No Action means maintaining the status quo, i.e., not doing the project. If the crude by rail project does not go forward, the risk to people and the environment will not occur. In a cost/benefit analysis the great benefit of the No Action alternative to the vast majority of the population is apparent.

Here are some questions that must be answered in the DEIR:

1. How will Valero guarantee that tank cars meet the DOT standards currently under review immediately—not phased in over years—so uprail communities are protected, plus implement the previously mandated Positive Train Control technology?
2. What are the daily and cumulative impacts and risks of transporting two extreme crude oils—tar sands and Bakken crude—through our cities, through our sensitive habitats and over our water supplies?
3. What are the cumulative impacts of the Valero daily train in the context of the additional 3 daily oil trains being approved currently in Bakersfield and the one daily train to San Luis Obispo, all possibly traveling through Sacramento? Include the increased potential for spills, accidents, greenhouse gas emissions, conflicts of interest on the rails, etc.
4. What is Valero's liability should there be a spill or accident on the oil trains en route to Benicia? Who carries enough coverage for a catastrophic incident? Will the taxpayers ultimately be responsible?
5. Why are the boundaries of the DEIR limited only to travel from Roseville to Benicia and not extended at least to the borders of CA if not all the way to the extraction sites? The impact and risk analysis area should be considerably extended.

We urge you to redo the DEIR with an honest assessment of the true impacts and cumulative effects of this project, including the lifecycle effects of the products transported, and with answers to the preceding questions. With such an assessment it is obvious that this project should not go forward.

Sincerely,

Laurie Litman
President, 350 Sacramento