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Testimony for Benicia City Council Meeting on April 4, 2016

These comments accompany the powerpoint slideshow based on the Oil-by-Rail Safety in California Report published in June 10, 2014 by the Governor's Office. Please add these comments to the public record for the Valero Crude-by-rail Project.

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I have prepared a slideshow that I hope will be useful in providing a statewide perspective as I believe your decision here in Benicia to allow Valero to introduce the daily transport of crude oil – a hazardous substance - through northern California cannot be limited to the concerns of this city alone.

1. ***The Oil-by-Rail Safety in CA Report*** – released in June of 2014 – was timed for your draft EIR and is included in the Valero Crude-by-rail records. It includes a Map highlighting 4 “Crude-by-Rail Areas of Concern.”
2. The report provides the final analysis of Governor Brown's Interagency Working Group on the dangers of introducing crude-by-rail transport into CA. You can see we have oil trains crossing the trestle bridge in the steep Feather River Canyon now bound for Kinder Morgan in Richmond or S. CA.
3. The interactive map of CA shows all rail lines. If you play with this map (my written testimony provides the link), select the hand symbol across the top of the screen and move around the screen with it. Zoom in and out. Give it time to come up.
4. The areas in red show that all routes into CA (here you see only the northern routes) have significant stretches of high hazard rail, often over or parallel to critical rivers.
5. There are three main routes where **unit trains of 100+ tank cars come into CA** from the north, and all end up in Roseville. There apparently UP has agreed to divide the unit trains into trains of only 50 cars for Valero in Benicia. Oregon and Washington states already have extensive oil trains, pipelines and ports, perhaps because CA was considered too dangerous and difficult until recently.

6. The first route is from Oregon south through Shasta, Dunsmuir and Redding to Roseville. In 1991 in the hazardous Dunsmuir area on this close-up (see the red), 15 tank cars derailed, spilling herbicides into the Sacramento River and killing everything for 20 miles. It took a decade to recover. Can we risk another derailment and toxic spill here?

The purple lines to the north are earthquake faults. Green areas are sensitive species or habitat occurrences, and blue indicates rivers or water crossings.

7. Skip. (Slide of key markings: colors mentioned in slide 6.)
8. Trains enter the second route – the Feather River Canyon - from Oregon or Nevada. In Nov. 2014, 12 grain cars tumbled down the steep slopes, spilling corn into the river. Imagine if they had been oil tank cars instead with their history of breaching, spilling oil, and bursting into flame?

The third route over the Sierra Nevada Mountains at Donner Pass requires 5 engines because of the elevation climb. So far no unit trains of crude oil have been spotted on this route. The preferred route so far is through the Feather River Canyon. The elevation may be lower, but look at the long stretch of hazardous area.

9. HazMat team locations. Pink dots are the best trained emergency teams, yellow are support teams with less training, and blue squares are non-certified teams, mostly volunteers in rural areas. **CA is unprepared to protect rural and wilderness areas in the north, and with our hot, dry summers, even one breached car can ignite a forest fire.** The more populated areas are perhaps better protected, though oil train fires in recent years have been left to burn themselves out.

10. The key for the map.

11. The Sacramento-Benicia area includes known fault lines at Fairfield and Martinez (who knows about unknown faults), species sensitivities, many water crossings including the Suisun Marsh, and urban hazmat team placements.

12. This map is enough reason to deny the project. It's simply too dangerous bringing crude oil into CA by rail. The regional concerns include:

- a. Trains run right through neighborhoods & downtowns, putting infrastructure, and more importantly, lives at risk.
- b. A derailment in more remote areas could spark a wild fire in our hot, dry fire season.
- c. Tracks run beside and cross over critical water supplies where a spill could pollute drinking water.
- d. Trains run through sensitive species and habitat occurrence areas.
- e. Known geologic faults run close to Benicia and the tracks.

https://www.cooldavis.org/wp-content/uploads/Oil-by-Rail-Risk-and-Response_Map-haz-mat-team-locations-1.pdf

My Powerpoint presentation showing screen shots of the map can be found here:

<https://www.cooldavis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Oil-by-Rail-Safety-in-CA-map-1.pptx>

Thank you,

Lynne Nittler
Citizen of Davis, CA