

Valero should be ashamed – and called out for secret meddling

By Roger Straw, October 7, 2018

I believe that no current Benicia City Council candidate was involved in nor favors push polls. But the reason for Valero to smear one candidate and lift another is clear. Valero can't be unaware that Mr. Largaespada stood firm with Valero and against the will of the people during the controversial Crude by Rail debate in 2014-16. Planning Commissioner Kari Birdseye voted with the unanimous decision to stop Valero "in its tracks" on that dangerous and dirty proposal.

More importantly perhaps, following our election in November, the City Council will likely once again consider whether to look into passage of an Industrial Safety Ordinance (ISO). Valero's bottom line for this: new fees, tougher local regulations. The Refinery can't miss the differences among the candidates when it comes to environmental protection and the health and safety of the community.

Here's the thing: Valero has every reason - and every right - to openly and fairly voice its preference. But to secretly fund dirty tricks to achieve its goal is a tactic that should be soundly criticized by all candidates. I'll vote for Birdseye, and hope that our next Council will include 3 women for the first time ever.

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Benicia