

Chevron update: Small, quick step for less pollution with more jobs

March 17, 2011: Richmond's Planning Commission voted unanimously to require an emission-cutting dome on a new hot oil storage tank at Chevron's Richmond refinery. Our community presence ensured that Chevron's latest project will both reduce pollution and create jobs.

Chevron proposed replacing five old storage tanks with new tanks to hold gasoline, tetramer (a diesel-like hydrocarbon), cutter oil, and recovered oil at the refinery, and building one new water tank for firefighting. The new tanks are bigger than those they replace. Newer tanks tend to be lower-emitting, but bigger tanks tend to be higher emitting. The company said it designed the project for essentially no change in pollution ("net-zero" emissions). Community members wanted assurance that instead of continuing or increasing, emissions would be reduced.

Domes on floating-roof storage tanks reduce emissions by blocking wind effects on tank seals and fittings. Chevron proposed domes for two floating-roof tanks to store gasoline. CBE suggested that adding a third dome on the proposed floating-roof tank storing heated recovered oil would ensure that the project reduces emissions.

Putting domes on these tanks could reduce annual emissions of volatile organic compounds by several tons. The tanks replacement project will provide an estimated 10–20 construction jobs over four years. The public review and approval that ensured these environmental *and* jobs benefits occurred under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and local land use requirements. Assuming no appeal from Chevron, this public review process will have taken a total of 59 days.