

May 22 letters to the editor

Letters to the editor, Contra Costa Times © 2013 Bay Area News Group

Posted: 05/21/2013 04:00:00 PM PDT

Updated: 05/21/2013 07:14:26 PM PDT

Big Oil gets another corporate handout

The August explosion at Chevron Richmond proved refinery safety and community health are concerns requiring serious solutions.

Assembly Bill 26 isn't a solution but another corporate handout. California's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund was meant to help communities facing health and economic threats from climate change. AB 26 would use it to allow profit-rich oil companies to outsource jobs.

There's no evidence the contracted workers would be more skilled than those they replace, and there's nothing in AB 26 that would make anyone safer. Nor would the bill curb pollution -- California refineries would emit more carbon dioxide per barrel processed than any other U.S. refining region.

AB 26 also defies public opinion: Californians overwhelmingly supported environmental protections when they rejected Proposition 23 in 2010.

The bill also institutes a dangerous, short-sighted "blame the worker" approach to safety instead of focusing on root causes. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board found, in part, that the Richmond fire resulted from Chevron ignoring six recommendations over 10 years to replace and monitor a corroded pipe.

Sadly, AB 26 would make it easier for oil companies to ignore real issues and make us all less safe as a result.

The Committee on Appropriations plans to consider AB 26 on May 24. Tell them to reject it: apro.assembly.ca.gov/membersstaff.

Miya Yoshitani

Bill Gallegos

Robert LaVenture

Yoshitani is with the Asian Pacific Environmental Network based in Oakland; Gallegos is with Communities for a Better Environment based in Oakland; LaVenture is the western director of United Steelworkers.