

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Contact:**

Andrés Soto, Communities for a Better Environment, (510) 237-6866

Jed Holtzman, 350 Bay Area, (415) 828-3854

Shoshana Wechsler, Sunflower Alliance, (510) 332-4110

**TAR SANDS REFINING EXPANSION RUBBERSTAMPED—WITHOUT CLIMATE IMPACT REVIEW**

**CALIFORNIA CAP-AND-TRADE CITED AS REASON**

San Francisco, CA—Even as San Francisco gears up to host the Governor Brown co-sponsored Global Climate Action Summit next week, local air regulators mandated to protect air quality and the climate are taking significant steps to allow increased tar sands refining and creeping refinery emissions in the Bay Area. Heavy public protest is expected at the September 5th BAAQMD Board of Directors meeting, which will be preceded by an Idle No More SF Bay-led prayer circle and teach-in outside BAAQMD headquarters. Local climate and environmental justice advocates plan to sound the alarm about the widening gap between lofty California climate goals and the reality on the ground here in the Bay Area and other refining centers in the state.

**WHAT:** BAAQMD Board of Directors Meeting

**WHEN:** Sep. 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 9:30 AM; Idle No More Prayer Circle and Teach-In, 8 AM

**WHERE:** 375 Beale St., San Francisco

A recent public records request reveals that BAAQMD staff issued an administrative permit on August 16, 2018 to increase production capacity at the Phillips 66 refinery by 61.3 million gallons per year. This permit allows for increased heavy oil processing, or hydrocracking, at the Rodeo facility, and will enable the refiner to process the increased amounts of Canadian tar sands oil it proposes to bring in across San Francisco Bay via nearly tripled oil tanker traffic in a wharf expansion project. This small but highly significant step actually allows Phillips 66 to begin implementing its goal of switching its San Francisco Refinery over to tar sands. The Rodeo refinery is connected to its sister refinery in Santa Maria by pipeline; together they make up the larger San Francisco Refinery. Two years ago, multi-community protest shut down a Phillips 66 proposal to increase tar sands deliveries by oil train to the Santa Maria facility.

**Sejal Choksi-Chugh, Executive Director of San Francisco Baykeeper said this about the permit:**

"The company is trying to sneak its expansion past regulators and the public by pretending each little increase is unconnected, but we aren't fooled."

The permit was issued without any public review or notice while Chief Air Pollution Control Officer Jack Broadbent was meeting with First Nations representatives and touring tar sands mining sites in Alberta, Canada. The fact-finding tour, which included several BAAQMD board members, took place at the urgent request of members of Idle No More SF Bay, who urged local regulators to connect the dots between the destructive impacts of Canadian tar sands mining on carbon-sequestering boreal forest and First Nations peoples, soaring greenhouse gas emissions and local Bay Area air quality and public health.

**Said Pennie Opal Plant of Idle No More,** "It is wildly irresponsible for Phillips 66 to add to the problems that are causing sick refinery communities and the climate disruption impacting us in California and around the world. Phillips' expansion proposal must be stopped and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the agency to stop it." **Jed Holtzman of 350 Bay Area stated:** "BAAQMD has committed to a vision of a fossil-free Bay Area in 2050, starting now with steep reductions of the pollution that causes premature death in our communities and destroys the stable climate. Yet its action to allow Phillips 66 to expand its refinery infrastructure ensures more local air pollution and more greenhouse gas emissions. Air District permits must be aligned with agency goals."

News of the secret permit was distressing to many local climate and environmental justice advocates. "This type of rubber-stamping of refinery permits demonstrates how BAAQMD serves at the pleasure of the fossil fuel industry, not the citizens who live in the Bay Area," **said refinery neighbor Nancy Rieser of C.R.U.D.E., Crockett-Rodeo United in Defense of the Environment.**

The permit was issued nearly five years to the day after the Air District board passed a resolution condemning the KXL pipeline. That resolution warned against the more intensive processing required by tar sands oil, which causes enormous quantities of toxic, criteria and greenhouse gas pollutants to spew from refinery smokestacks. As the 2013 resolution made clear, "any increase" of these pollutants will cause negative impacts on the health of local residents.

Tar sands bitumen is the most carbon-intensive, hazardous and polluting major oil resource on the planet to extract, transport, and refine. Despite this, the Air District staff is intentionally bypassing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and refusing to evaluate the climate impacts of its permit, which opens the gates to increased tar sands refining. Staff argues that it must bypass CEQA, one of California's greatest environmental protections, because the revised cap-and-trade program (AB 398) that Governor Brown so aggressively pushed for last summer has withdrawn the authority of all regional Air Districts to directly

regulate refinery-emitted greenhouse gases. California's carbon pollution-trading program is now BAAQMD's chief alibi for eliminating public and board review, and for refusing to protect the climate from oil pollution.

Activists are also alarmed by the gutting and indefinite postponement of a long-awaited particular-matter reduction regulation impacting the Chevron, Marathon (formerly Tesoro) and Shell refineries. A letter submitted to the Air District by 25 environmental justice organizations on August 16 points to yet another secret agreement—this one signed with the oil industry by the District's Chief Air Pollution Control Officer. The agreement commits the Air District to propose and advocate for weakened emissions limits. (1)

As the Global Climate Action Summit rapidly approaches, our air quality regulators and designated climate protectors need to stop coddling the oil industry and start demonstrating real accountability to the public. People's lives depend on it.

(1) [Demand Letter to BAAQMD for Refinery PM Clean-Up](#) under Research/Our Research at [www.CBECAL.org](http://www.CBECAL.org).

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