

## Demonstration over 'bomb trains' hauling crude oil in Richmond

By Doug Oakley  
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RICHMOND -- About 60 demonstrators on Saturday held signs and made speeches against "bomb trains" of highly toxic and flammable crude oil now stopping at the Kinder Morgan rail yard here, where the oil is loaded onto trucks and taken to area refineries.

The demonstrators, some carrying signs with the word "Boom!" on them, are angry that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District in February issued Kinder Morgan a permit to transfer crude oil from rail cars to trucks without a public hearing. Activists filed a lawsuit to stop it.

The lawsuit, filed in San Francisco Superior Court by [Communities for a Better Environment](#), the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council, asks for a preliminary injunction against further crude oil operations at Kinder Morgan and suspension of the air district permit, pending a full review under the California Environmental Quality Act. A hearing is set for July 18.

No injuries or arrests were reported at the demonstration.

[Andrés Soto, an organizer for Communities for a Better Environment, which helped organize the demonstration, said he lives about a quarter of a mile away from the train tracks in Benicia.](#)

["What's really scary is on the other side of these 'bomb trains' are schools and houses," Soto said.](#)

Jim Neu, of Martinez, joined the demonstration Saturday, carrying a sign that said "Martinez Says No to Bakken Bomb Trains." The sign is referring to oil taken from the Bakken region of North Dakota that moves on trains to refineries around the country.

"We live right downtown near the tracks," Neu said. "The sad thing is that people who don't live near tracks are kind of oblivious to the threat."

The issue came to the forefront last summer when an unattended freight train carrying Bakken crude derailed, caught fire and killed 47 people in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, a few miles over the border from Maine.

A spokeswoman for the Tesoro Golden Eagle refinery outside Martinez confirmed earlier this spring that its facility receives between 5,000 and 10,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude. That is about two to four trains per month, and it is received through a third-party facility, the spokeswoman, Tina Barbee, said. She did not identify that facility.

A spokesman for Kinder Morgan reached in Houston on Saturday declined to comment. A spokeswoman for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District in San Francisco also declined to comment, citing the lawsuit.

At the demonstration in Richmond on Saturday, Bradley Angel, executive director of Greenaction, which helped organize it, said it's simple: "Crude oil should stay in the ground."

Reach Doug Oakley at 925-234-1699. Follow him at [Twitter.com/douglasoakley](https://twitter.com/douglasoakley).