

Officials want to recirculate environmental report on Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery project

By Tom Lochner Contra Costa Times

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MARTINEZ -- Contra Costa County officials want to recirculate the environmental impact report for a propane-and-butane recovery project at the Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery that is the subject of a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

The hearing, which also features two appeals of a land use permit from the county Planning Commission, began in January and was continued three times already. Conservation and Development Director Catherine Kutsuris said Friday she recommends the board hear testimony about the project Tuesday, then continue the hearing to Oct. 28, pending a cumulative health risk assessment to be included in a recirculated draft report.

The Phillips 66 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Recovery Project calls for installation of new equipment to recover and sell propane and butane instead of burning it as fuel at the refinery or flaring off excesses. The project would reduce emissions of several pollutants, including sulfur dioxide, the refinery has said.

The appeals, by **Communities for a Better Environment** and Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger on behalf of the Rodeo Citizens Association, contend the report understates potential impacts of the project and warn that Phillips plans to process more and dirtier crude oil. Phillips has described many of the appellants' contentions as incorrect and speculative.

Meanwhile, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District weighed in, saying the draft report should include calculations of toxic air contaminant emissions from the refinery and assess cumulative health risks in the surrounding communities. Members of the public raised concerns over the cumulative effects of pending projects at Phillips 66 and other Bay Area refineries.

In the staff report, Kutsuris said that given the issues raised by the air district and the public, a decision not to recirculate the draft report would be contrary to the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Several environmentalists greeted the proposal to recirculate the EIR and continue the hearing to October as good news.

"The concerns that have not been addressed are so serious and great in number that this (environmental impact report) should be sent back to the drawing board," said Nancy Rieser of Crockett, a member of C.R.U.D.E. (Crockett-Rodeo United to Defend the Environment).

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IF YOU GO:

What: Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors hearing

Where: County Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez

When: 9 a.m. Tuesday