

PRESS RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Bay Area refinery expansion would impact local health, climate and increase Bay Area tanker traffic, oil spill risk

Environment, community leaders host town hall to discuss tar sands expansion proposal at Phillips 66's San Francisco Refinery

RODEO, CA — The tar sands expansion proposal at Phillips 66's San Francisco Refinery in Rodeo would impact local health and the climate by increasing refinery emissions and worsening air quality for nearby communities, while also increasing tanker traffic and the risk of a devastating oil spill in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Local environmental and community groups hosted a town hall on Thursday evening, March 7, in Rodeo to discuss the risks of the proposal to bring in more oil tankers and process more heavy crude oil like tar sands. A video of the event is at [facebook.com/standearth](https://www.facebook.com/standearth).

"Many of our First Nations relatives in Canada are doing all they can to resist the Trans Mountain Pipeline, which would allow the transport of tar sands through our Bay via over 120 tankers. This type of oil cannot be completely cleaned from water. What are we willing to lose?" -Pennie Opal Plant, Idle No More SF Bay

"The refinery's latest plan to expand dilbit imports, cracking of that bitumen, and recovery of those diluent oils threatens to lock in a worst-case future for our climate, air, health, safety, and Bay. People have a right to know about this unnecessary threat." -Greg Karras, Communities for a Better Environment

"As a physician who is also trained in public health, I'm deeply opposed to this proposed refinery expansion. It will expose the community to toxins that cause or worsen lung and heart disease, lead to stroke and other nervous system abnormalities, and cause reproductive problems, as well as cancer and leukemia. Together, let us be guided by the motto of medicine: 'First, do no harm.'" -Jan Kirsch, M.D., M.P.H

"Our community knows refinery expansions are a dead end. We need our public officials like the Contra Costa County supervisors to stand with us in preventing new pollution sources from harming our health, and supporting real solutions like a just transition for refinery workers and local economic development that protects air and water quality." -Isabella Zizi, Stand.earth

[Rodeo Citizens Association](#), [Crockett-Rodeo United to Defend the Environment](#) (CRUDE), [Fresh Air Vallejo](#), [Idle No More SF Bay](#), [Sunflower Alliance](#), [350 Bay Area](#), [Communities for a Better Environment](#) (CBE), and [Stand.earth](#) sponsored the town hall. A chairperson from the Benicia Planning Commission also presented.

BACKGROUND

Bay Area residents — including the communities of Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole, Hercules, Rodeo, Crockett, Vallejo, Benicia and Martinez — are concerned over plans to bring in more oil tankers and process more heavy crude oil like tar sands at Phillips 66's San Francisco Refinery. The refinery is currently seeking permits to expand its wharf capacity and increase the number of oil tankers traveling to its refinery through San Francisco Bay. No environmental impact report (EIR) has been released for this project. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District asked Contra Costa County to lead that environmental review, but the County has not yet agreed to do so.

If the refinery's full expansion and increased wharf capacity is permitted, more than twice as many crude oil tankers could travel to the refinery, many of them carrying tar sands from Canada. The refinery expansion alone could mean a tenfold increase in the amount of tar sands passing through San Francisco Bay. [A September 2018 panel in Oakland detailed the connection between Canada's Trans Mountain Pipeline and the Phillips 66 San Francisco Refinery expansion.](#)

Tar sands is one of the dirtiest crude oils on the planet and is extremely difficult to clean up in the event of an oil spill. Tar sands is high in sulfur and heavy metals. Extracting and refining it creates an outsized climate impact, and refining it increases disproportionately severe health impacts in nearby communities. Tar sands is so thick when it comes out of the ground that it is thinned for transport, creating diluted bitumen or dilbit. The toxic and flammable diluent makes it unsafe to approach a tar sands oil spill until the chemicals have evaporated.

- [Canada's tar sands pipeline plan threatens Bay Area](#) (Mercury News, October 2018)
- [Phillips 66 Seeks Huge Increase in Tanker Traffic to Rodeo Refinery](#) (KQED, July 2017)

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