

California Teachers Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Educators Take Stand Against Central Coast Oil Train Project

Hazardous crude oil trains endanger California's schools and students

BURLINGAME—The California Teachers Association, out of concern for the safety and well-being of students and educators, is sending a strong message in opposition to the proposed Phillips 66 oil train offloading facility in San Luis Obispo County, which involves trains moving millions of gallons of hazardous crude oil through highly-populated areas of the state near hundreds of schools.

At its June 7 meeting and on behalf of 325,000 educators, the CTA State Council of Education—comprised of 800 educators representing all areas of the state—took action requiring the CTA to send a letter to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors urging them to reject the project permit.

“Educators are very concerned about dangerous oil trains running past California schools. Hundreds of California schools are located near current and future oil train routes,” said CTA President Dean E. Vogel. “Educators and parents can help stop these Phillips 66 oil trains by encouraging local officials in San Luis Obispo County to put student and community safety first and not issue Phillips 66 a permit for their oil train project.”

The Phillips 66 facility would, if approved, bring mile-long oil trains carrying 2.5 million gallons of crude oil nearly every day through densely populated areas and near hundreds of schools throughout the state. The county’s planning commission is expected to vote on the project in the coming months. A string of oil train derailments, fires and explosions have struck communities across North America.

Nine school boards and five teachers unions in California have publicly opposed the Phillips 66 project, including in [Ventura](#), Martinez and [Oakland](#). Just last week, the Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association in San Luis Obispo County [sent a letter](#) to county decision makers urging them to deny the project, citing high risk of train derailment and toxic diesel emissions, which are especially harmful to children.

“Our county has 29 elementary, middle and high schools in the blast zone of an oil train explosion,” said Kathleen Minck, a 30-year elementary school teacher and member of the Lucia Mar Unified Teachers Association. “Our children at these schools are in extreme risk if there is a major oil train accident. Also, increasing air pollution from the trains will affect all our children with asthma, even in the absence of a major accident.”

More than a dozen local governments along the rail route affected by the Santa Maria Phillips 66 project have also submitted letters or passed resolutions against the project, including San Jose, Berkeley, Davis and Ventura County. More than 23,000 people from across California have also voiced opposition to the project.

“The Phillips 66 oil train project would be a huge gamble with children’s lives,” said Valerie Love with the Center for Biological Diversity. “Hundreds of schools are located within the blast zone of an oil train fire or explosion. It’s heartening to see teachers take a strong stand for health and safety of their students.”

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The 325,000-member CTA is affiliated with the 3-million member National Education Association.