

Dears Messrs. Bateman and Smith:

Thank you for your presentation last night in Richmond. I am grateful for your work, and the existence of your organization.

As your Executive Director then admitted, the BAAQMD does not have the authority to shutter Chevron or any other company's refinery(ies). That of course is not news.

While this is not the concern of your organization, I note that there is no politician and no judge, either in California or anywhere else in the U.S., that has the authority to close a refinery. I could be wrong, but as of now, it does not appear so.

What this means, as you are aware, is that oil companies are a law unto themselves - yet another instance of "too big to fail" that is poisoning America's body politic, and literally poisoning thousands of Americans who for reasons largely out of their control (i.e., environmental racism), must and do suffer the recklessness of these companies.

You are likely aware that the U.S. Chemical Safety Board's Interim Investigation Report revealed that the section of pipe that failed and caused the August 6, 2012 Chevron refinery fire in Richmond, had not been replaced since it was installed in 1976 (37 years ago), and its thickness equaled that of the width of two business cards (which the USCSB made available for public inspection). The resultant toxic smoke sent approximately 15,000 people to local hospitals.

The present maximum penalty for oil companies for proven negligence is \$25,000. In Chevron's case, it is estimated that their annual profit breaks down to approximately \$500,000 per hour.

A proposed CA Senate Bill (691) would increase single-day violations of air quality regulations that affect entire communities, and I respectfully urge your organization to support it.

Under these circumstances, why should Chevron pay serious attention to any regulatory agency? Chevron and all other oil companies have long since been above the law, and while that remains on paper relatively harmless, in the real world, it has been, and continues to be, devastating.

There is no reason to assume that Chevron and the other Bay Area refineries will not process heavier, tar sands crude if the lighter crude is not available, which of course contains far more sulfides, which will greatly increase greenhouse gas emissions AND place an ever greater burden on the refinery pipelines than already extant.

If the section of Chevron's failed pipe is indicative of the integrity of its piping elsewhere in their Richmond refinery, then it is not a matter of if but when another rupture will occur. The public and the environment remain hostage, 24 hours, 7 days a week, to the whims of Chevron management and, in effect, all Bay Area refineries.

I again thank you for your work and your dedication in a most difficult arena.

Very truly yours,

Richard Freeman

