



LOS ANGELES WATERKEEPER®

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 13, 2013

CONTACT: Rachel Stich
(310) 394-6162 x108
rachel@lawaterkeeper.org

Valero to Transport Tar Sands Oil to LA by Rail- Poses Major Threat to Water Quality & Public Health

November 13, 2013 (Los Angeles, CA) — Valero Energy Corporation has announced plans to transport tar sands oil from Canada to their Wilmington refinery by rail. Transporting massive volumes of oil by train into Los Angeles presents major threats to water quality and public health, given the compounded threat of this heavy, corrosive, and toxic oil and increasing risks of oil-by-rail transportation.

Valero's proposal to build a rail terminal at the Port of Los Angeles and refine as much as 60,000 barrels per day of diluted Canadian tar sands bitumen would exchange more than 76% of its refinery input from conventional crude to diluted bitumen. Their recent application was submitted incomplete to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) with an expedited start date of February 1, 2014. Once the application is complete, it will be determined if the project will involve public comment and formal environmental review. Valero claims that this new rail terminal and the increase of fuel sources will not significantly increase air pollution, health issues or liability risks.

"Bringing tar sands oil by rail into Los Angeles County has significant water quality and human threats. A spill from this unconventional oil could devastate our groundwater, creeks, rivers and ocean," said Brian Meux, Marine Program Manager at Los Angeles Waterkeeper.

Tar sands bitumen is a low quality, heavy toxic tar-like substance, often existing as a solid at room temperature. When transferred to rail cars, it is diluted with other toxic petroleum products, creating a liquid form called diluted bitumen, or 'dilbit'. Dilbit is explosive and highly toxic, containing high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, n-hexane, and other toxins that can affect the central nervous system. It has high levels of heavy metals that can accumulate in the environment, causing health hazards to humans and wildlife. After a release of dilbit into a water body, the heavy components separate from the diluent, sink in the water column, and collect in the sediments at the bottom. Dilbit spills effectively destroy aquatic and marine habitats from top to bottom. The conventional oil spill equipment is often not useful for bottom cleaning, making it extremely difficult to clean up dilbit spills.

Significantly more oil is being transferred by rail compared to five years ago, with increasing risks of explosions and inland oil spills. The recent rail explosion and oil spill in Lac-Mégantic, Canada killed 47 people, and an Alabama marsh was recently subjected to a train crash, explosion, and oil spill. In addition, a train carrying petroleum coke recently derailed in Benicia, the site of Valero's Bay Area refinery, where they also plan to import tar sands by rail. Valero's plan to move massive quantities of tar sands oil through Los Angeles to the Wilmington refinery is a major concern for numerous waterways, habitats and residential areas. In addition, if tar sands oil or any other type of oil penetrates the soil, it could also pollute the groundwater sources of LA County.

With regard to preparedness for inland oil spills, Los Angeles Waterkeeper is concerned about the current lack of state-level funding for inland spill response, and is working with state agencies to try and evaluate these new risks and appropriate resources and effective methods to address this issue. Los Angeles Waterkeeper and other environmental organizations also urge the City of Los Angeles and South Coast Air Quality Management District to require a formal public comment period and a comprehensive environmental review for Valero's application to transport tar sands oil by rail to Los Angeles.

For further information, please contact Rachel Stich at (310) 394-6162 x108.

#

ABOUT LOS ANGELES WATERKEEPER

Founded in 1993, LA Waterkeeper's mission is to protect and restore Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay, and adjacent waters through enforcement, fieldwork, and community action. We work to achieve this goal through litigation and regulatory programs that ensure water quality protections in waterways throughout L.A. County. LA Waterkeeper's Litigation & Advocacy, Marine, and Water Quality teams conduct interconnected projects that serve this mission.