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## **Bay Area Residents and Environmental Advocates Push Swift Adoption of Rule to Cap Refinery Emissions**

*Urgent need for health and climate protection from massive “tar sands” crude pollution threat*

San Francisco — Today, residents of refinery-corridor communities, along with public health advocates, refinery workers, and environmental organizations, stood together with San Francisco Supervisor and Bay Area Air Quality Management District board member John Avalos to call on the Air District to implement numeric caps on refinery emissions at today’s levels. This call to action takes place one day before the Air District board meets to discuss a strategy for lowering refinery emissions to address climate disruption and health impacts, which disproportionately impact low-income, minority communities living near the Bay Area’s five refineries.

**Oil refining is the biggest industrial polluter in the Bay Area, yet today there are no facility-wide emission limits.** The oil industry is rushing to exploit that loophole by locking in their ability to refine dirtier grades of crude oil before emissions limits can be put in place. Since 2012, the industry has sought permits for at least 10 infrastructure projects that could increase emissions region-wide by expanding the capacity to refine low-quality oil including Canadian tar sands.

At the Wednesday, June 15th Air District board meeting, Air District staff will present four possible refinery emission control measures, including **the essential first step for lowering climate-warming emissions and toxic pollution: to establish numeric caps on emissions at today’s levels.** Under this measure, each refinery would have a limit on allowable emissions of greenhouse gases, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide, thus preventing any increase in the toxic air pollution that poisons Bay Area residents and contributes to climate disruption.

"Correcting the failure to have any overall limit on oil refinery pollution before it jumps up drastically on bottom-of-the-barrel crude is reasonable, appropriate, and urgent to protect our health and climate," said **Greg Karras of Communities for a Better Environment.**

Even as California’s demand for oil has dropped in recent years, oil production has risen in the Bay Area — the second-largest refining center in western North America. **Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter** organizer **Ratha Lai** voiced concern that the Bay Area will suffer more pollution as a result of becoming “the gas station of the Pacific.” Lai said, “The Air District cannot continue to give out permits for new construction at refineries without having in place strong, enforceable numeric caps on what the refineries can emit.”

**Richard Gray** of **350 Bay Area** said, “Bay Area residents are calling on the Air District to live up to its mission statement by ‘creating a healthy breathing environment for every Bay Area resident while protecting and improving public health, air quality, and the global climate.’”

“We have been calling on the Air District to adopt a rule to limit Bay Area refinery emissions for four years,” said **Andrés Soto** of **Communities for a Better Environment**. “The Air District promised to close the loophole in air and climate protection even before the 2012 Richmond Chevron refinery disaster, which sent 15,000 people to the hospital. They need to act now by adopting these limits to address disproportionate health impacts in refinery corridor communities.”

The Community-Worker network pressing for numeric caps on refinery emissions includes Communities for a Better Environment, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Sierra Club SF Bay Chapter, Sunflower Alliance, 350 Bay Area, California Nurses Association, United Steelworkers Local 5, Bay Area Refinery Corridor Coalition, Richmond Progressive Alliance, and Community Science Institute.

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