

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

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From: Irene Cooke <irene.cooke@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 3:46 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Change of Ownership, Guarantor, and Operator for the Las Flores Pipeline System

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Honorable Supervisors:

I urge you to overturn the planning commission's decision to approve the above referenced change of ownership. The planning commission erroneously entered the finding that the applicant was in compliance with permit conditions, which is blatantly false. The pipeline operator was found guilty of felony negligence in failing to maintain the pipeline, causing the 2015 Refugio disaster. There is no evidence that the pipeline's protective liner has been repaired or replaced to bring it into compliance with the FDP permit requirements and no evidence that the proposed owner has agreed to an enforceable schedule to come into compliance.

The EIR and FDP require that operation of the pipeline comply with all applicable DOT, state, and local regulations and standards. The FDP permit and EIR require an *effective* corrosion protection system, including a functioning liner *and* cathodic protection system. According to the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), the pipeline's protective liner has been compromised to the point where even a properly operated cathodic protection system cannot effectively prevent external corrosion. The PHMSA's Investigation Findings and Conclusions stated that ***the rupture that caused the Refugio Oil Spill should not have happened if the pipeline's integrity had been maintained to federal standards.***

To approve the transfer, ***the Board must find either*** that the prior owner (Plains) is in compliance with all requirements of the FDP permit, *or* that the proposed owner (PPC/Exxon) agrees to an enforceable schedule to come into compliance.

The planning commission's finding that the applicant is "in compliance" blatantly ignores the court ruling that the pipeline has not been properly maintained. In the interest of public safety and trust in the integrity of our County government, I urge you to overturn the planning commission's findings and deny the request for Change of ownership. In the alternative, please at least require PPC to enter into a written agreement with the County that specifies an enforceable schedule to come into compliance with the requirements of their FDP permit. This would allow the County to oversee PPC's efforts to inspect and repair the pipeline, and ensure additional safety measures are in place to protect against future ruptures.

Respectfully submitted,
Irene Cooke
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