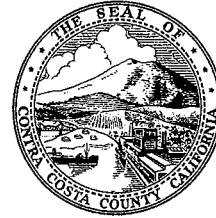


CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS COMMISSION



February 26, 2018

Supervisor John Gioia, District 1
11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D
El Cerrito, CA 94530

RE: Elimination of the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

Dear Supervisor Gioia:

I am writing you today on behalf of the Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commission to alert you to the fact that the latest proposed 2019 fiscal year budget from the Office of Management and Budget eliminates funding for the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB), and to urge you to advocate against this proposed cut. The CSB, which was created in 1990, has a mission to drive chemical safety change through independent investigation to protect people and the environment. The CSB conducts comprehensive, root cause investigations of serious chemical incidents. The agency then makes recommendations aimed at preventing similar incidents from recurring. CSB investigations have collectively identified gaps in regulatory requirements, industry standards and guidance, workforce training and operations, and emergency planning and response that caused or exacerbated the human and environmental consequences of incidents.

Throughout its twenty year history, the CSB has initiated more than 130 deployments and issued more than 800 recommendations related to chemical incidents. Incidents investigated by the CSB have resulted in more than 200 fatalities, 1,200 injuries, and significant environmental damage. In Contra Costa County, the CSB has investigated 3 major chemical incidents - the 1999 fire at Tosco that killed four workers, the 2016 sulfuric acid spill at Tesoro, and the 2012 fire at Chevron. The CSB report after the Chevron fire recommended numerous changes to the County's Industrial Safety Ordinance, which are now in the process of being implemented.

The Hazardous Materials Commission unanimously voted 9 – 0 at their October 26, 2017 meeting to urge the Board of Supervisors to oppose the elimination of the CSB. During their discussion, the Commission noted that during the debate to consider creation of the CSB the County Board of Supervisors and then-Congressman George Miller offered strong support for the agency's creation. The vice president of federal government affairs for Andeavor, Stephen H. Brown, was quoted in a February 1, 2018 Bloomberg News article as saying, "The mission of the Chemical Safety Board is worth preserving. A credible safety oversight entity that partners with stakeholders on accident investigations, conducts root cause analysis, and fosters learnings without those activities being sometimes hijacked by the political agenda of individual Board members would be the ideal." Also, on February 14, 2018 former Contra Costa County

Members: George Smith, Chair, Rick Alcaraz, Jack Bean, Don Bristol, Lara DeLaney, Fred Glueck, Frank Gordon, Steven Linsley, Jim Payne, Mark Ross, Ralph Sattler, Leslie Stewart, Usha Vedagiri

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Supervisor and current US Congressman from the 11th District, Mark DeSaulnier, was interviewed on KQED and said he strongly disagrees with the proposed budget cut.

The Hazardous Materials Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors pursue whatever avenues are available to it to oppose this proposed budget cut, including directing your federal lobbyist to lobby against it, and requesting that the various County and State organizations to which you belong oppose it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. B. Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

George B. Smith

Chairperson, Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commission

Members: George Smith, Chair, Rick Alcaraz, Jack Bean, Don Bristol, Lara DeLaney, Fred Glueck, Frank Gordon, Steven Linsley, Jim Payne, Mark Ross, Ralph Sattler, Leslie Stewart, Usha Vedagiri

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