

Date: November 19, 2019

From : Erin Hallisy, Crockett resident

To: Board of Supervisors

Re: Board of Supervisors Meeting of 10-23-19

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Comments

My schedule did not allow me to attend the meeting here on October 23rd, but I had the opportunity to watch the video online. I was particularly interested in the presentations and discussion on the industrial accident at NuStar. There are a number of concerns that arose for me while I was reviewing the meeting online.

1. The meeting opened with a quote that was read aloud: *October is crisp days and cool nights, a time to curl up around the **dancing flames** and sink into a good book.*
 - I don't appreciate this insensitive quote or the laughter that followed only 7 days after the NuStar explosions and fires. **My sister and I were both in shock from those dancing flames.**
 - On October 15 just after 1:45, as I left Crockett I saw black smoke rising so I drove the freeway instead of the old road. **I was on I-80 at Selby right after the fireball of dancing flames had just started.**
 - **My sister felt the first explosion as she sat at her desk. She called 911 right away, as we now know before NuStar did. My sister then witnessed the second explosion from her kitchen window, seeing the tank lid flying up under a giant ball of fire (dancing flames?).** She thought it was within the refinery (who'd believe the lid would have flown clear up over that hill between the refinery and Selby? She thought that I was driving through the refinery on San Pablo Avenue at just that time. She was in shock and experienced PTS from this terrible event.

The time following these explosions was extremely stressful, to say the least. We know there are rows of tanks and thought one after the other might go...What were we breathing? Where were the sirens? We watched the news: what was taking so long? Why weren't there more resources to fight this huge fire and prevent further disaster?

2. It is a concern that **Supervisor Glover was not in attendance, nowhere in sight** even after explosions and fire in his district. Supervisor Gioia was visible but not Mr. Glover. I am wondering whether Supervisor Glover has even watched the entire meeting online.
3. Agenda/minutes refer to this "incident" as AN explosion; there were **TWO explosions.**
4. Regarding the NuStar worker who did not get out, taking shelter in a ditch and waiting for fire rescue: a comment gave credit to NuStar for knowing where their people were. **Really? Credit to NuStar for having people working in dangerous, potentially life-threatening conditions without an escape route?**
5. The statement was made that NuStar is under local fire protection.
It is careless of the County to foist such a burden on local fire protection entities.

Do local fires cause SHELTER IN PLACE and MAJOR ROADWAY CLOSURES for hours? Does NuStar pay extra ongoing fees for this local fire protection service? Were local resources available to combat other emergencies while local fire protection was responding to NuStar's incident? **Is NuStar footing the bill for what occurred on October 15 or are we subsidizing the consequences of their careless operations?**

6. Regarding the Industrial Safety Ordinance Committee: it seems to be classified as an Ad Hoc committee with the last meeting as listed on the website being **Sept 2012**. Some synonyms for Ad Hoc are "unplanned," "unstudied," and "improvised." **Is Industrial Safety an "Ad Hoc" concern? Has this committee met since Oct. 15?**
7. It was stated that there was no increased traffic to emergency rooms that night.
(a) We were sheltering in place; (b) The roads were closed; AND
(c) Just a reminder that our nearest hospital was CLOSED four years ago.
8. There was a discussion on evacuation: Supervisor Burgis raised the importance of evacuation and people being evacuated in an orderly, safe way. Supervisor Mitchoff interrupted to say that every community has to have a process in place for doing that. **Is Supervisor Mitchoff unaware that Crockett is NOT a city but rather is an unincorporated area of the County and, as such, is under County for primary government services?**
9. Supervisor Mitchoff then continued on about safety procedures that do exist and the importance of personal responsibility, adding that we don't need shelter in place to occur before people take responsibility and apply their own reasonable logic.
Personal responsibility is a factor but here it was used to excuse the failure of the shelter in place warning system. Thank goodness Supervisor Gioia said that not everyone has the same ability to respond, particularly vulnerable populations.
10. I did not hear anyone report on or ask about what was going on at NuStar operationally just prior to the explosions. The prior day's earthquake is a convenient explanation. While that may be a serious possible contributor to the accident, we have had many earthquakes, including two centered just near Crockett, and some stronger than the one that day prior and nothing like this happened. There has to be more to it than that.

The County has shirked its responsibility for oversight on dangerous operations within our communities that threaten lives, property, and the environment. The County approved NuStar's operations and thus condoned NuStar's lack of an emergency plan and lack of adequate resources to respond to an emergency. The people of Crockett, Rodeo, Tormey, and Port Costa pay taxes for services the County makes us continually ask for. It would make sense to think that when the County approves a facility that has the potential to explode and harm us, the County would monitor operations seriously, not leave it to an Ad Hoc committee that does not meet. **In my estimation, along with NuStar, the County of Contra Costa is a primary responsible party to what occurred on October 15.**