

RESOLUTION NO. 18-030

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON,
CALIFORNIA, SUPPORTING A BAN ON THE USE OF HYDROFLUORIC
ACID IN THE TORRANCE AND VALERO REFINERIES

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2015 an explosion and fire at the Exxon Mobile refinery in Torrance severely damaged a portion of the Torrance Refinery's equipment used in the production of fuel. Four contract employees were working nearby and needed first aid for injuries sustained while fleeing the explosion and fire. Debris fell on a building frequently used by operators, though the building was unoccupied at the time. Catalyst white ash dust was deposited outside the refinery property into the nearby community. The explosion rocked the neighboring communities; and

WHEREAS, a large piece of debris, over 80,000 pounds in weight, was thrown onto scaffolding around two settling tanks, each containing hydrofluoric acid (HF). Pure HF is highly toxic chemical that can seriously injure or cause death in concentrations as low as 30 ppm. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) investigated the causes and consequences of the explosion; and

WHEREAS, the CSB findings were sobering, concluding that there was the potential to release a toxic cloud and causing serious injuries or death to many community members. Wind pattern maps completed using the wind direction and wind speed the day of the explosion demonstrated that the toxic cloud would have travelled as far as the intersection of Avalon Boulevard and Carson Street, covering over one-quarter of the City of Carson, had the HF tanks ruptured. Over 800,000 people in the South Bay would have been in harm's way; and

WHEREAS, after the explosion, Exxon Mobile sold the refinery to PBF Energy. Ironically two years to the exact day another blast and fire broke out at the refinery. The call to ban HF at the Torrance refinery began soon after the February 15, 2015 explosion, but has met with no success in Congress or the State Legislature, despite the efforts of local legislators, cities, community groups and environmental activists. Fortunately, Carson's refineries do not use HF and the City Council adopted a ban on HF in the Tesoro Refinery in the \$45 million Tesoro Community Benefits Agreement adopted in 2017; and

WHEREAS, in April of 2017, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) formed a working group to study the consequences of banning HF and is drafting Rule 1410, which has not yet been finalized; and

WHEREAS, the AQMD has been studying the need for improved air quality monitoring at the local refineries. The sole air quality monitoring station in the Carson area is located in northwest Long Beach. Known as Rule 1180 and recently adopted by the AQMD Board, the Rule requires the installation of air quality monitoring equipment at the fence lines of the refineries. The monitoring equipment would be able to give "real time" readings on air pollution, via smart phone applications or over the internet; and

WHEREAS, the AQMD is requiring that PBF Energy outfit the Torrance Refinery with this equipment now, ahead of outfitting the Andeavor and Phillips 66 Refineries in Carson. The

AQMD has indicated that it may be another two to three years before the fence line monitoring equipment will be installed in the Carson refineries. This AQMD deployment schedule was adopted despite the repeated communications and efforts by the City of Carson to fast track the installation of this equipment. The equipment could provide an invaluable public safety purpose, in altering the region of the leaking HF gas and other toxic pollutants into Carson and our surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, despite the potential economic impacts, the banning of HF is a major regional public safety and public health concern. The CSB report found that over 800,000 persons could be injured or killed if the HF storage units at the Torrance refinery had ruptured. It was only by lucky circumstances that the debris did not rupture the HF tanks. The region is ill prepared to deal with this type of emergency, as there are no unified plans for notifying and evacuating 800,000 residents and the hundreds of businesses around these refineries should there be a HF rupture or explosion; and

WHEREAS, the County Board of Supervisors and the City of Redondo Beach have adopted resolutions calling for the ban on HF. Elected officials in Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach are scheduled to address the issue this month. The City of Torrance has adopted the position calling for improvements to the refinery, without endorsing a phase-out of hydrofluoric acid. The Torrance Refinery has had repeated safety and environmental issues and has paid out millions in fines. This pattern is likely to continue. Two weeks ago, PBF was ordered by the State to remove tens of thousands of gallons of toxic waste stored at the refinery for decades.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

- Section 1.** That due to the major regional and local public safety issues created by the use of Hydrofluoric Acid at the Torrance and Valero Refineries, that the use of Hydrofluoric Acid should immediately be curtailed.
- Section 2.** That the City should use all available efforts to implement Rule 1180 for the Andeavor and Phillips 66 Refineries in Carson to install and operate fence line air quality monitoring without delay.
- Section 3.** That the Mayor shall be authorized to contact the surrounding communities to request their support for the immediate implementation of Rule 1180 for all refineries, including the Andeavor and Phillips 66 refineries.
- Section 4.** Based on the aforementioned findings, the City Council hereby approves Resolution No. 18-030
- Section 5.** The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution and shall transmit copies of the same to the AQMD, the surrounding cities, the County Board of Supervisors and Carson's State and Federal elected officials.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 20th day of March, 2018.

Mayor Albert Robles

ATTEST:

City Clerk Donesia L. Gause Aldana, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney