

MAXINE WATERS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
43RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE:
FINANCIAL SERVICES
RANKING MEMBER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0535

April 4, 2018

PLEASE REPLY TO:
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Dr. William A. Burke
Chairman
South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)
21865 Copley Dr.
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Dear Dr. Burke:

I write to express my strong support for the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) adoption of the proposed Rule 1410, which would ban the use of hydrofluoric acid (HF) and modified hydrofluoric acid (MHF) at refineries within SCAQMD's jurisdiction, including the Torrance Refinery.

The Torrance Refinery has a long history of accidents and safety problems, including fires, explosions, and leaks. One of the most serious incidents was an explosion on February 18, 2015, which injured four workers, registered as a magnitude 1.7 earthquake, and covered much of the surrounding community with ash. A Chemical Safety Board investigation into this explosion concluded that it could have been catastrophic. The explosion launched an 80,000-pound piece of equipment into the air, close to a container of HF. If this volatile and dangerous chemical had been released, it could have injured or killed a large number of people in the surrounding community. While we were fortunate that no HF was released in that explosion, another such incident could occur at any time. I have patiently awaited an adequate response from the Refinery to address these concerns. To date, neither I nor the community have been satisfied with the Refinery's solutions to these very serious and dangerous issues.

My constituents have expressed serious apprehensions about the safety of the Torrance Refinery, and they are especially concerned about the continuing use of HF and MHF.

I am also concerned about the workers at the Torrance Refinery. In the event of a catastrophic release of HF or MHF, these workers would be in grave danger. While I understand that many of them may be concerned about their job security, their safety – and the safety of the surrounding community – is paramount.

I respect the decision of the SCAQMD to expedite the rulemaking process and potentially adopt a ban on the use of HF and MHF. I appreciate your consideration of this request to adopt Rule 1410, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to protect the health and safety of the residents of the South Coast region.

Sincerely,



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress