



Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting
Valero East – 610 Industrial Way, Benicia, CA - Drive to the back of the building
Tuesday, June 10th, 2025 - 4:30 PM – 5:35 PM
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

The meeting was conducted in person at Valero East. Dennis Lowry called the meeting to order at 5:28 pm. The [June 10th Agenda](#) was approved & the [April 8th CAP Meeting minutes](#) were approved as written. The following participants attended the meeting:

CAP Members

Dennis Lowry	CAP Chairman & Community at Large Member
Patrick Cawley	Benicia Chamber of Commerce
Terry Scott	City of Benicia - Councilmember
Rod Sherry	Benicia Industrial Park Association
Amy Hirsh	Benicia Unified School District, Board Member
Marilyn Bardet	Good Neighbor Steering Committee
Kristine Passalacqua	Community at Large Member

Valero CAP Representatives

Lauren Bird	VP and General Manager
Paul Adler	Community Relations & Government Affairs Director
Melissa Manke Fimbres	HSE Director

City and County Representatives

Colby LaPlace	Solano County, Sr. Hazardous Material Specialist
Trey Strickland	Solano County, Environmental Health Manager

Valero employees

Cameron Wicklow	Valero, Manager Refinery Process Safety
Frank Hartig	Valero, Manager Plant Security
David Johnston	Valero, Supervisor Laboratory
Pam Fischer	Valero, Executive Administrative Assistant

Additional Attendees

Kelly Dillingham	Community Member
Aria Berliner	California Energy Commission

Refinery Update

- Lauren Bird, Vice President & General Manager
 - On April, 16, 2025, the Valero Energy Corporation informed the California Energy Commission (CEC) of their intent to idle, restructure or cease operation of the Benicia Refinery in April 2026. This notification adheres with the one-year notification requirement by the CEC.
 - Following the announcement, information sessions were held by representatives from our corporate headquarters with all Valero Benicia employees throughout the day.
 - Marilyn Bardet inquired about the operation of the tank farms and Lauren informed her that although Valero is responsible for the material in the tanks, Sonoco owns a few of them.
 - A similar question focused on the ownership of the pipelines and Lauren stated that pipelines within the refinery are owned by Valero and others may be owned by 3rd party contractors, such as Kinder Morgan. Later in the meeting, Paul reminded the group that there is a map of northern California's pipelines in the [Community Relations Presentation](#) packet that is located on the CAP Website.

- After discussion about the April announcement concluded, details about the May 5, 2025 fire were shared. Lauren explained that at ~8:50 am a furnace stack that had internal corrosion fell and struck equipment causing a loss of containment which resulted in a fire. The Valero Fire Department managed to put out the flames in 1 hour 20 minutes. The Benicia Fire Department was also on site but were not utilized for firefighting.
- The refinery's internal alarm was sounded, announcements were made, and the incident was reported to the Fire Department along with other regulatory agencies. Due to the smoke, the Benicia Fire Department did announce a "Shelter in Place" and by 10:50 a.m. the 'All-Clear' was announced.
- During the fire, the refinery activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) here at Valero East and the refinery's incident response team was established. Numerous representatives from various incident response agencies also were present at the EOC and ~60 people were in attendance. Lauren was pleased with the response and containment but our one concern was the accountability of all personnel in the refinery (including the badging-in of our contractors) that were on-site. During an incident, we must account for 100% of employees, contractors and all visitors. This should be done within ½ hour, but it took 1 hour and 38 minutes. We will be having drills to ensure this improves.
- The refinery submitted a 72-Hour Report which has been uploaded onto the [City of Benicia's Public Information Bank website](#).

CAP Member Updates

- Kristine Passalacqua – Members of the community are very concerned about the April announcement and do not want to lose Valero. Those that have lived in the community prior to the refinery being here recognize the improvements made since the refinery came into Benicia.
- Amy Hirsh – The school district has already felt the impact of the refinery's pending closure because we had to stop funding our S.T.E.A.M. program that was being partially funded by Valero. The people that she interacts with recognize the great volunteer support from Valero. Much of the community has a great relationship with Paul Adler through Kiwanis, Rotary, Chamber, etc.
- Marilyn Bardet – She never thought that Valero Benicia refinery would close in her lifetime. Valero's closure would represent an 'abrupt transition' for the City of Benicia and the state. She believes that a key factor driving the decisions for refinery closures made first by P66 and then Valero is that demand for gasoline is trending down in California.
- Rod Sherry – The members of BIPA are concerned with the secondary impact of Valero closing, i.e. restaurants, equipment rental, contractors, vendors that manufacture and supply parts for Benicia, etc.
- Terry Scott – The city recognizes the concern for financial distress related to the refinery's announcement, concern for impact to the schools, volunteer support in the community, charitable organization, donations and the impact that the refinery provides as a tax source. The Mayor is attempting to put together 4 different task forces to prepare plans to manage the Valero impact, but he is having difficulty because there is thought that Valero won't really be leaving. The city of Benicia prefers that Valero stays.
- Patrick Cawley – The business community is very concerned; many support the refinery being here. Valero's unwavering generosity to charitable organizations in the community will be a big loss.
- Dennis Lowry- **The change of the date for the August meeting was put to vote and the new date will be Wednesday, August 20th at 4:30 pm.** Dennis is trying to become a part of the ISO Oversight Committee as he can bring a layman's view to the committee. He also shared an article from Oxford Economics that Chevron in Richmond contributed \$1.1 billion to the county's GDP in 2022. Media reports and indicators are showing that politicians are taking some of the blame for refineries closing, due to regulations.
- Paul Adler, Community Relations & Government Affairs Director
 - Paul shared that there are 2 upcoming informational meetings about the refinery and industry related issues - BIPA Meeting on June 17th & WSPA- Rotary Lunch on June 18th 12:15 pm
 - Lionel Largaespada is heading the Community Investment Task Force (one of the 4 City Task Forces being set up by the city.) He has provided him the details of the amounts Valero has donated to the various charitable and community organizations.

The meeting ended at 6:45 pm.

2025 CAP Calendar

- **Wednesday, August 20th** - 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm @ Valero East
- Tuesday, October 14th - 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm @ Valero East
- Tuesday, December 9th - 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm @ Valero East