

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

No Bay Trail construction money in state lease to Chevron

By Katherine Tam
West County Times

Posted: 02/02/2009 04:00:47 PM PST

Where funding to construct a section of the San Francisco Bay Trail at the Chevron Richmond refinery will come from remains up in the air.

The State Lands Commission has renewed Chevron's 30-year lease of state tidelands where oil tankers are moored at \$870,000 a year, with a commitment from the oil company to provide land both north and south of Interstate 580 for a 0.6-mile path that closes a gap in the Bay Trail between Point Molate and the San Pablo Peninsula.

Trail supporters, who spent the past few months lobbying the commission for more, argue that the lease provisions are inadequate because they do not require Chevron to give at least \$5 million for trail construction.

"I would think a \$24 billion profiting corporation like Chevron would have no problem coming up with \$5 million to ensure the safety of people using the Bay Trail," Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin said.

Chevron is not ready to commit to construction funding until a trail route and design are finalized, refinery spokesman Brent Tippen said.

"It's a conversation we are willing to have," he said, but he declined to discuss dollar amounts.

The company will continue to discuss a route with the city of Richmond, Caltrans and the Association of Bay Area Governments, he said. A request for proposals is expected to be issued this month for engineering work, and the project would be subject to a Caltrans review afterward. It could be a year and a half before discussions about funding take place, Tippen said.

The State Lands Commission's decision came nearly two months after commissioners held off granting the oil company's lease to allow more time to negotiate a financial deal in which Chevron, Caltrans, the city of Richmond and the East Bay Regional Park District would contribute to a "stone soup."

Trail supporters considered that a victory and continued to lobby for trail funding. State Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner and Sens. Loni Hancock, Mark Leno and Mark DeSaulnier echoed that plea in a Jan. 29 letter to the state commission. The Richmond City Council promised to give \$1.5 million to \$2 million to build the trail, and the parks district was willing to provide another \$1 million.

Ultimately, the state commission's decision last week did not include a financial package to construct the path, much to trail supporters' chagrin.

What it included was Chevron's commitment to provide land south of Interstate I-580 and \$2 million for security needs, both of which were carried in a deal between Chevron and the city of Richmond approved in July, the day the city approved Chevron's contentious proposal to replace equipment at its refinery.

The new provisions under the state commission's order include Chevron giving land north of I-580 for the trail and developing a plan to deal with

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

lighting and glare that could affect neighbors.

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi said in a telephone interview that the provisions were the result of "hammering" Chevron.

Staff writer Todd Perlman contributed to this story. Reach Katherine Tam at 510-262-2787 or [ktam@ bay areanewsgroup.com](mailto:ktam@bayareanewsgroup.com).

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™