Sample Cover Letter for Community Advocacy Resolution

Dear Members of Community Body or Organization

We are coming to you today concerning a critical threat to the health and safety of our Bay Area communities. The Bay Area is home to five major oil refineries, which together constitute our largest industrial source of air pollution. Not only has the American Lung Association recently given the Bay Area an overall grade of “D,” we now know that air pollution kills 2,000 Bay Area residents every year.

Oil refineries already contribute to high levels of asthma, stroke, heart disease, and cancer in our communities. Worse, we are headed down a path toward even more serious health and safety risks. These refineries have already invested in or are planning infrastructure additions that will enable them to process dirtier, more toxic and higher greenhouse gas (GHG)—emitting crude sources, such as tar sands, the dirtiest of them all.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)—whose mission is to insure healthy air, improve public health, and protect the climate—has yet to address refinery-wide limits on the emissions of toxics, particulate matter, and GHGs. BAAQMD has been weighing options to limit or reduce emissions for nearly four years. Now it is in the final stages of a major rule revision, so-called Rule 12-16. However, as it stands today, this rule will still not stop the inexorable decline in our air quality.

At BAAQMD’s June 1st Stationary Source Committee meeting, their staff presented four options for Rule 12-16. Three options offer the potential for future emission reductions, but each will take a year or more to be implemented and will allow the tar sands transition to proceed unchecked during that time.

The fourth option, the Community-Worker proposal, advocates a fixed and enforceable limit, or “cap,” on refinery emissions, which will halt the transition to tar sands and protect community health and the climate. This emission cap is based on historical emissions by the refineries and will not force refiners to reduce production, but it will stop them from refining dirtier crude.

We are asking you today to support the Community-Worker proposal, which includes refinery emission limits on toxics, fine particles and greenhouse gases into Rule 12-16. We need the BAAQMD Board of Directors to direct staff to include and prioritize this option in Rule 12-16. We support the options for future emissions reductions proposed by the BAAQMD staff, but even they admit the Community-Worker proposal provides the only alternative that can be implemented immediately to prevent future increased emissions.

This proposal has been attacked by the fossil fuel industry as a threat to workers and their jobs: nothing is further from the truth. This proposal will not result in any job loss. In fact, United Steelworkers Local 5, which represents many refinery workers in the Bay Area, has come out in support of the proposal. (See their attached support letter.)

The many community groups and nonprofits supporting this proposal include Communities for a Better Environment, Asian-Pacific Environmental Network, the California Nurses Association, 350 Bay