TOWN HALL ON REFINERIES

Hosted by Congressman DeSaulnier

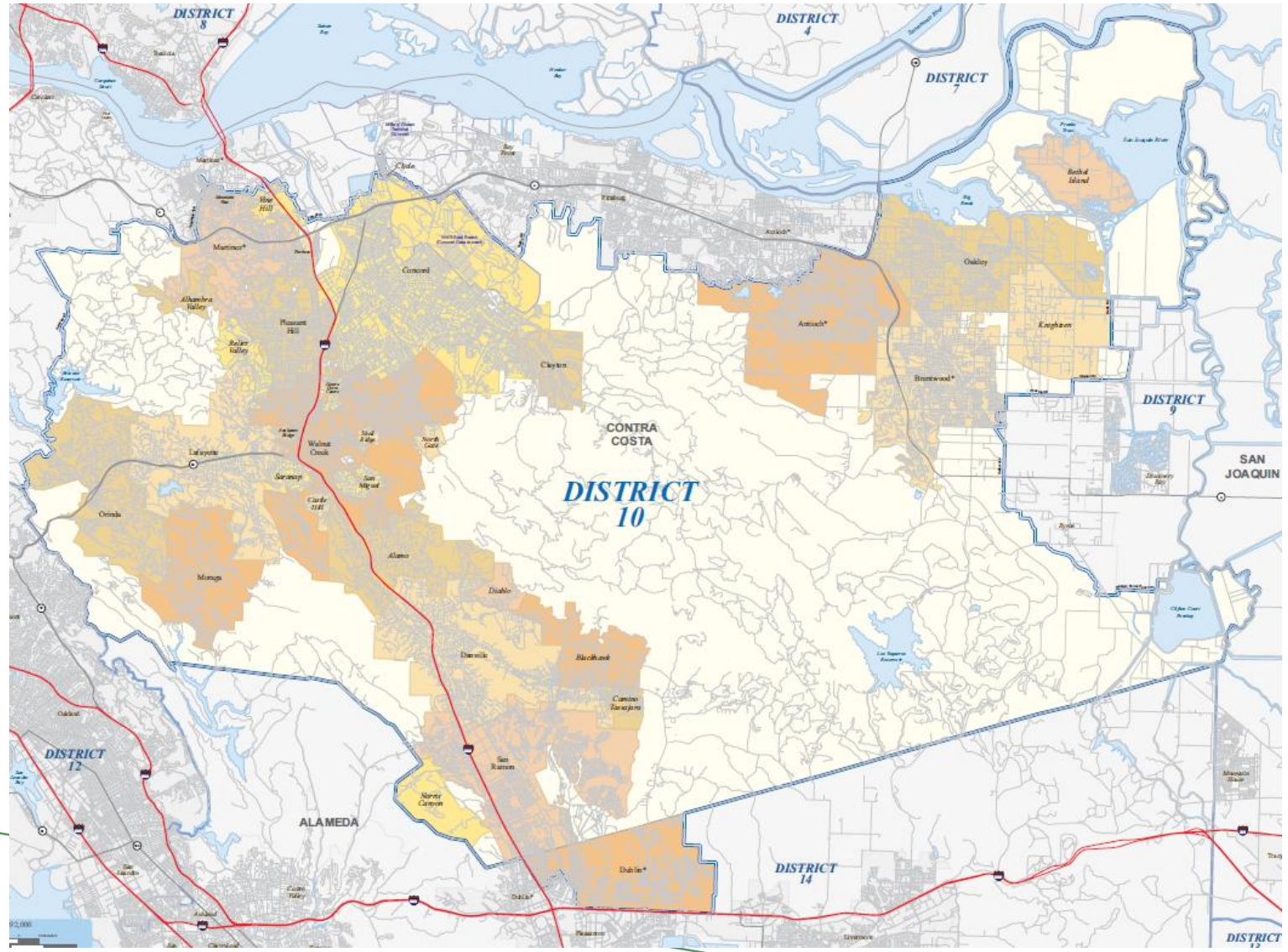


House Ethics: Congressional vs. Campaign Activity

- Members of Congress are governed by the House Code of Official Conduct, which includes standards for whether, how, when, and where Members may engage in campaign activity.
  - This town hall is being hosted in my official capacity as Representative for California's 10th District, not as a candidate in a campaign. Therefore, House Rules prevent me from:
    - Solicitating, receiving, and accepting campaign contributions.
    - Making political endorsements.
    - Directing attendees to websites, resources, or events created or operated by a campaign or any campaign-related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

You can learn more about the House Code of Official Conduct and how it relates to this event here:

California's 10th Congressional District



CA-10 includes most of Contra Costa and part of Alameda County

Committees and Caucuses

COMMITTEES:

- Ethics Committee – Ranking Member
- Education & Workforce Committee
    - Ranking Member of the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee
    - Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
- Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
    - Subcommittees on Highways, Aviation, Water Resources and Environment, and Railroads

CAUCUSES:

- Congressional Animal Protection Caucus
- Congressional Progressive Caucus
- Bipartisan Cancer Survivors Caucus – Co-Chair
- Urban Regional Studies Caucus – Co-Chair
- Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition
    - Climate Jobs Task Force – Co-Chair
- Gun Violence Prevention Task Force
- Reproductive Freedom Caucus

Mark's Local and State Experience

- **California Air Resources Board and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District** (1996 - 2006).
  - Served on agencies responsible for air pollution, emissions, and regional air-quality standards.

- **Contra Costa County Supervisor** (1994 to 2006)
  - Worked on refinery safety, air quality, transportation, and environmental issues affecting the county.

- **California State Senator and Assemblymember**, where 61 of his bills became state law.

- **Chair of the State Assembly Transportation Committee**
  - Became the first freshman in State Assembly history to chair the committee, which oversees transportation policy, vehicles, fuels, and related infrastructure. He also chaired the Select Committee on Air Quality.

- **Chair of Senate Transportation & Housing Committee**
  - Led work on California's transportation system and infrastructure, including policies affecting vehicles and transportation emissions.

Mark's Work on Industrial Safety

- As a county supervisor, Mark authored the **industrial-safety ordinance** that placed stringent controls on refineries and chemical plants.
  - This ordinance later was the model for statewide and national regulations.

- Mark also sponsored **refinery flaring regulations** to strengthen oversight of refinery flaring and emissions.

- Mark secured **$750,000** for Contra Costa County to plan for the transition to a green economy.

- Mark has repeatedly pressed regulators and refinery operators for answers following local incidents, including by **demanding accountability from** PBF Energy after the 2022 Martinez spent-catalyst release and **calling on EPA to strengthen federal oversight** of refinery incidents in 2024.

- President Trump has consistently proposed eliminating the Chemical Safety Board (the federal entity that investigates refinery incidents). Mark has **successfully fought back to ensure the CSB is maintained and funded** to do its important work.

Refineries in Contra Costa



- There are 4 refineries in **Contra Costa County.**
  - PBF Energy's Martinez Refining Company (MRC) (Martinez)
  - Phillips 66 Refinery (Rodeo)
  - Marathon Petroleum's Martinez Renewables Refinery (Martinez)
  - Chevron Refinery (Richmond)
- California has 11 operating petroleum refineries, down from recent years as refineries across the state have closed or converted to renewable fuel production.

The Impact of Refineries in Contra Costa

- Oil refining is the largest sector of Contra Costa's economy.

- Refineries are the County's top property taxpayers.
  - Chevron, Martinez Refining Company, and Phillips 66 were **3 of the top 5 property taxpayers** in Fiscal Year 2023–24.
  - Those three companies alone paid about **$67 million in property taxes** that year.

- In addition, refineries employ about **3,000 workers directly** and support another **15,000 jobs** in construction, trucking, maintenance, and other industries.

The Transition to Clean Energy

- Refineries also create significant **air pollution, safety, and environmental risks** for workers and surrounding communities.
  - Nationwide, refinery workers experienced **more than 1,500 injuries** and **seven deaths** from 2017–2023.

- California is a national leader in the transition to clean energy, with 67% of the state's retail electricity coming from renewable energy sources in 2024.

- Through the Inflation Reduction Act, Congress provided **$369 billion** for clean energy and climate investment.

- Mark authored the Clean Corridors Act which provided $2.5 billion for EV charging infrastructure nation-wide as part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

- Mark and Rep. Ted Lieu **led Congressional investigation into whether Exxon misled the public about climate change**; Congress later brought major oil executives before House Oversight Committee to testify about the industry's climate messaging.

- Locally, the former Phillips 66 Rodeo Refinery has converted into a renewable fuel facility.

A History We Cannot Forget

- In the 1990s, Contra Costa **averaged one major refinery incident each year** causing death or serious injury
- **In 1997,** an explosion at the Tosco Avon Refinery killed one worker, and **in 1999,** another fire at same facility killed four workers.
- Investigators cited **"flawed management supervision"** and unsafe practices for the incidents.
- The tragedies helped spur workers, families, and the community to demand stronger safety standards and accountability.



Recent Incidents Reinforce the Need for Vigilance

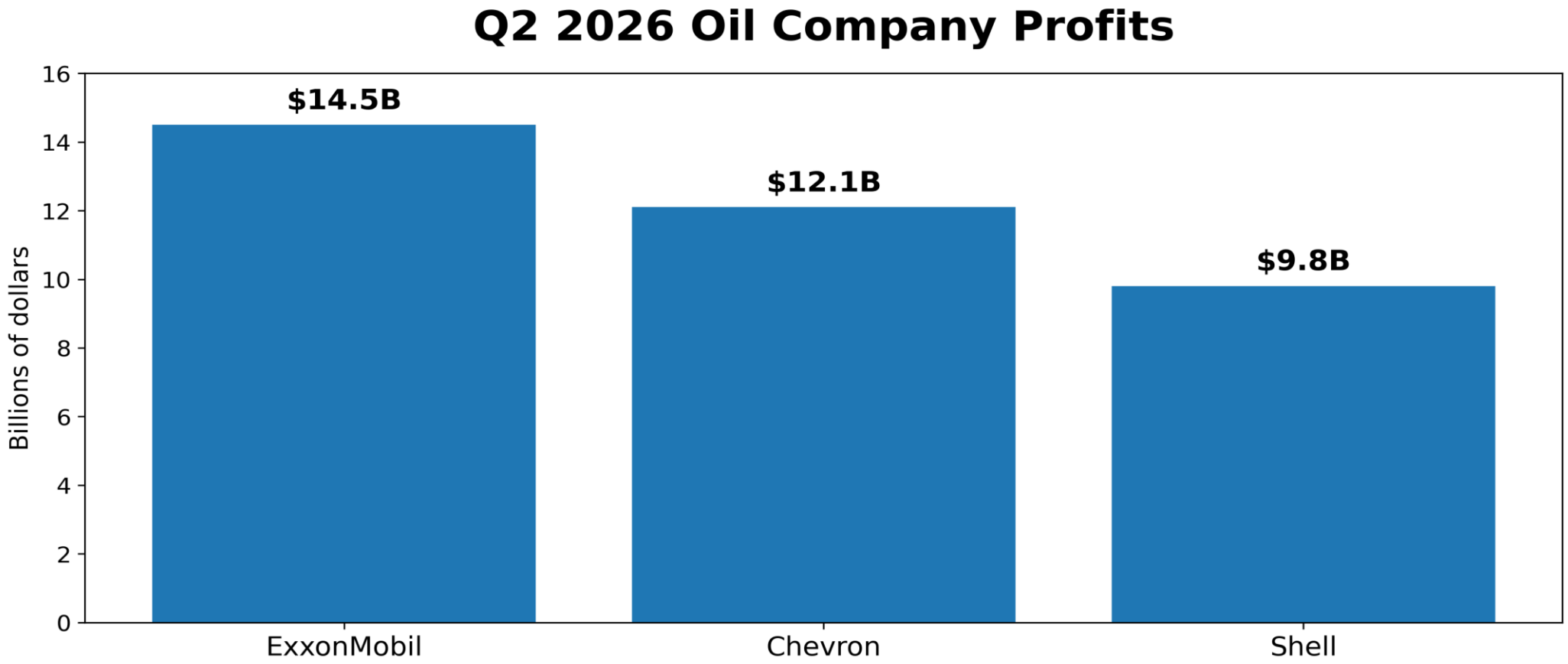


- Bay Area refinery flaring **increased by 43% from 2020 to 2025**, including a major spike in 2023
- More than half of Bay Area refinery flaring events in 2023 occurred at the two Martinez facilities.
- A 2023 fire at Marathon Renewables severely injured an employee, causing third-degree burns over 80% of his body.
- Between 2020 and 2024, the Martinez Refining Company received **163 air pollution and environmental notices of violation.**
  - In 2026, the company agreed to a $10 million settlement covering those violations.

Sky-High Fuel Prices

- California gas prices **rose $1.10 per gallon between February 28 and June 15** following the start of the U.S.-Iran war, adding to already high fuel costs for families
- Refinery fires and unplanned outages can tighten California's fuel supply. Northern California **gas prices rose about 42 cents per gallon** following the February 2025 Martinez refinery fire.
- Higher diesel prices can increase the cost of goods for consumers because shipping operations rely heavily on diesel.
- Transitioning to alternative fuels can reduce our reliance on volatile oil markets and benefit the environment, but the Trump Administration has rolled back investments in clean energy.

Big Oil Profits



Combined Q2 2026 profits: 36.4*billion*|*About***404 million per day**

Source: NPR, July 31, 2026

Refinery Profits Per Gallon

Refinery profit margins increased sharply in 2022, with several refiners earning more than **twice the 2001–2021 average of 32 cents per gallon**.

Year	Chevron	Marathon	PBF Energy	Phillips 66	Valero	Shell
2022 Q2	**N/A**	**$1.01**	**82¢**	**79¢**	**83¢**	**N/A**
2022 Q1	N/A	47¢	70–78¢	42¢	33¢	N/A
2021	37¢	33¢	48¢	18¢	23¢	N/A
2020	24¢	22¢	23–26¢	8¢	13¢	20¢
2019	49¢	41¢	40–43¢	21¢	28¢	32¢
2018	45¢	27¢	36¢	28¢	24¢	27¢

2001–2021 average across refiners: 32¢ per gallon

Who Pays for Climate Change?

- In 2018, **Boulder, Colorado sued ExxonMobil** and **Suncor Energy**, seeking compensation for costs associated with climate change.
- Boulder alleges the companies knew about the climate risks of fossil fuels while concealing those risks and misleading the public.
- **The Supreme Court heard arguments on October 5, 2026**, on whether federal law prevents these types of state-law lawsuits.
- The Supreme Court's ruling could affect more than 30 similar lawsuits brought by state and local governments seeking to recover climate-rated costs from fossil fuel companies.
- Mark joined **a Congressional amicus brief to support Boulder, CO** and push back against fossil fuel producers.

THANK YOU!

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