



## TORRANCE REFINERY ACTION ALLIANCE

Say No to Deadly HF/MHF

Saturday, February 7, 2026 - 2 PM

North High School

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Contact: Torrance Refinery Action Alliance**

Zachary Badaouie - [zbadaouie25@g.ucla.edu](mailto:zbadaouie25@g.ucla.edu), Steve

Goldsmith - [sgoldsmith84@gmail.com](mailto:sgoldsmith84@gmail.com) (310) 542-

6782 (landline). [www.TRAA.website](http://www.TRAA.website)

Saturday, February 7, 2026, Torrance Refinery Action Alliance (“TRAA”) and Indivisible South Bay (“ISBLA”) are holding an event to mark the **11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the February 18, 2015 Torrance Refinery explosion, a near miss for mass casualties from the world’s most dangerous industrial chemicals, *hydrogen fluoride* (HF).

**Time: 2 PM - 4:30 PM**

**Location: North High School’s Performing Arts Center, 3620 W. 182<sup>nd</sup> Street, Torrance, CA 90504 (entrance and parking on Yukon Avenue).**

The day’s program will include a teach-in with speakers presenting on the Torrance Refinery and risks associated with HF/MHF (2:00 PM - 3:30 PM), followed by a walk to the Refinery (3:30 PM - 4:30 PM). The community is invited to join TRAA and Indivisible South Bay to mark this important anniversary.

This concise film, created as a school project by a Girl Scout who was the recipient of the Girl Scout Gold Award, tells the HF story in 6:23 minutes. [The deadly chemical refineries are reluctant to quit](#)

The event will bring together local residents, workers, advocates, and community leaders to discuss the Torrance and Wilmington Refineries and ongoing risks associated with their continued use of HF, not only to Torrance and Wilmington residents but surrounding communities. Speakers and community members will reflect on the 2015 incident, share critical updates, and address the need for stronger protections for public health and worker safety, including accountability for the continued dangers posed by HF and our right to breathe clean air and avoid environmental exposures to hazardous chemicals that can cause mass casualties.

### **Background**

Eleven years ago, residents in the South Bay/Harbor area witnessed a near catastrophic accident when an explosion took place on the Exxon-Mobil refinery property. Heavy debris from the explosion fell just short of releasing thousands of pounds of pressurized Modified Hydrofluoric Acid (MHF) – a release that would have put the lives of refinery workers and residents within 6 miles of the refinery in jeopardy.

In those eleven years, one thing remained the same: the Torrance Refinery still uses MHF in its refining processes needlessly endangering workers, school children, pets, endangered species, and highly-skilled irreplaceable workforces. MHF is a highly toxic chemical that is used to make high-octane gasoline. It can form a dense ground-hugging cloud that poses mortal danger to anyone who comes in contact with it. Even a small accidental release of MHF during refinery operations could be catastrophic and result in mass casualties. Only two refineries in the State of California continue to use MHF – the Torrance Refinery and the Valero Refinery in Wilmington, while multiple safe alternatives are available.

However, much has changed that gives concerned residents cause for hope. When the February 2015 explosion occurred at the Torrance refinery the only commercially available alternative to the use of MHF in the refining of high-octane gasoline was sulfuric acid, the catalyst used by California's other refineries. Sulfuric acid poses its own risks, but since it cannot form a vapor at ambient temperatures, all credible experts agree it does not pose the catastrophic risk posed by MHF.

In the intervening years other alkylation processes have been developed and implemented, processes that have been deemed vastly safer than Sulfuric Acid – e.g., five years ago Chevron's ISOALKY ionic liquid process replaced Hydrofluoric Acid in a Chevron refinery in Salt Lake City. There are other such technologies deemed by the American Petroleum Institute to be "commercially proven."

In 2019 the SCAQMD halted its attempt at writing a rule to require the phase out of MHF at these two refineries but stipulated that it would periodically review new technologies to determine whether to mandate the phase out of MHF in favor of one of those new technologies. In 2022, SCAQMD staff reported favorably on two of these proven alternatives.

The EPA, in March of 2024, released a revision to the Risk Management Program as part of the Clean Air Act, requiring the consideration of these available alternatives, but failed to require conversion.

In these eleven years, support for transitioning to safer alkylation technologies has grown. Congressmembers Ted Lieu, Nannette Barragan, and Robert Garcia along with 7 other Representatives have co-sponsored a bill with Rep Maxine Waters, H.R. 10441. Letters of Support for conversion have been submitted by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi; Senator Ben Allen; Karen Bass and other local and national leaders, as well as many local Cities, including Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Carson which have supported transition, as have numerous City of LA Neighborhood Councils, Homeowner Associations, local environmental justice organizations and major unions such SEIU, ILWU and teacher associations. They all call for changing to a vastly safer commercially proven alternative.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved Supervisor Janice Hahn's (4<sup>th</sup> District) motion authorizing a "five-signature letter from the Board of Supervisors to Governor Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta calling on the State to take all possible actions to require refineries in California to convert from MHF to safer alternatives," and "directing the County of Los Angeles to support any new State or Federal legislation that requires refineries to convert from MHF to safer alternatives." AG Bonta responded by championing a letter to the EPA from 21 AGs urging conversion to an alternative.

While residents recognize that the Torrance Refinery and the Valero Refinery in Wilmington will need to continue producing gasoline and jet fuel, momentum continues to build for phasing out MHF in favor of a proven, commercially available alternative.

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#### **ABOUT THE TORRANCE REFINERY ACTION ALLIANCE, INC.**

Now a 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofit, TRAA was formed after an explosion on February 18, 2015, at the ExxonMobil Torrance Refinery (now PBF Energy's Torrance Refining Company) rocked Torrance and rained pollutant dust downwind for miles. It continues to meet regularly and provide the public with information about the threat of HF/MHF and the availability of alternatives.

TRAA ~ 4733 Torrance Blvd. #200 ~ Torrance, CA 90503

Email: [info@TRAA.website](mailto:info@TRAA.website) - [WWW.TRAA.Website](http://WWW.TRAA.Website)

See also, ["Our Refinery" CSULB Senior Documentary](#) providing community insights on the February 18, 2015 explosion/release; and the Chemical Safety Board's Report and Animation of the 2015 Explosion at ExxonMobil Refinery. <https://www.csb.gov/exxonmobil-torrance-refinery-explosion-/>

For substantive inquiries and details contact: Zachary Badaouie (TRAA President) [zbadaouie25@g.ucla.edu](mailto:zbadaouie25@g.ucla.edu) or Steve Goldsmith [sgoldsmith84@gmail.com](mailto:sgoldsmith84@gmail.com) (TRAA Board member) (310) 542-6782 (landline). *See also,*

For questions about this Press Release, contact Deborah Blair Porter ([deborah.blair.porter@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.blair.porter@gmail.com) or (310) 977-5377).