

# ENERGY PRODUCTION & SAFETY



Every day, urban residents around the world use energy without giving much thought as to where it comes from, how it is produced, and how safe it is to produce it. But on January 31, 2013, a series of explosions at the Richmond Chevron Refinery in Richmond, California raised important urban planning questions regarding the location of energy production sites and the safety of local residents.

Herein lies the tension: urban residents need energy, but in order to provide it in the current energy distribution system, energy must be produced and then transported from a centralized location.

By the laws of the economies of scale, these centers are very large, and painstaking security measures must be taken to ensure the safety of those working in and living around these sites. So how can the various entities and institutions involved – cities, governments, regulatory bodies, community members, and the corporations themselves – work together to ensure safe, efficient production of energy to meet our daily needs?

For this most recent accident at the Richmond Chevron Refinery (and there have been several in the past), the California Division of Occupational Safety & Health fined Chevron \$963,200 on 23 citations for “serious” violations. The city of Richmond has several pages on its website dedicated to providing city residents with information and news updates about ongoing investigations into the accident, and Chevron has set up a claims process through the city for residents who might have suffered medical and property expenses.

But the reality is that the Richmond Chevron Refinery isn’t going anywhere, and residents are much more concerned about their daily health. Some contend that the refinery doesn’t do enough to protect Richmond, a city of poorer, disadvantaged residents. It seems that the issue holds greater weight in the bigger picture of environmental justice.

Source: <http://www.globalsiteplans.com/environmental-design/energy-production-safety-explosions-at-the-richmond-california-chevron-refinery/>