Calif. lawmaker joins Norco group’s crusade

Waters wants Shell to expand buyout

By Littice Bacon-Blood
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The Concerned Citizens of Norco has enlisted the help of U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters of California in its effort to have Shell Chemical Co. buy out the four streets that make up the Diamond community in Norco.

In a program designed to move some residents away from the plant’s fence lines, Shell has offered to buy out residents on two streets, an offer that has upset residents who say all four streets should be part of the deal.

Waters, a Democrat, sits on the House Judiciary Committee and has a national reputation as an advocate for environmental justice causes. She visited Norco last summer as part of an environmental tour sponsored by Greenpeace. Since her visit, she has supported the residents’ quest and has written letters to Shell officials urging them to consider buying out all residents in the Diamond community.

“I visited. I walked through the community, and I understand the issue very well,” Waters said.

In a letter to Shell dated Nov. 1, Wa-

METRO

Shell stands by Norco buyout proposal

WATERS, from B-1

Shell wants to use the property as a landscaped buffer zone between homes and the plants.
Waters said she spoke to Shell officials in June and was told that they would reconsider their buyout stance.
Waters said she felt optimistic until she received a letter from Shell CEO Steven Miller in September indicating that the company has opted to stand by its original offer, she said.
“I was a bit surprised at his change in attitude,” Waters said.
In the Nov. 1 letter to Miller, Waters offered to meet with company officials to discuss the buyout.
Waters says her involvement in the issue depends on what the group wants.
“I plan my strategy in conjunction with the group,” she said. “We talk through it and we develop a strategy. I am willing to do whatever’s necessary to address this issue.”
Galland said she didn’t know whether officials have agreed meet with Waters.

Reporter Mary Swerczek contributed this report.
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