

Resolution Condemning Chevron Corporation for its Domestic and International Business Practices

Resolution condemning Chevron Corporation for a systematic pattern of ethically questionable investments, complicity in human rights abuses, and environmental devastation in countries and communities in which it operates.

WHEREAS, Chevron Corporation is a California based company profiteering off of the war in Iraq, and facing serious questions about its human rights and environmental record in countries such as Ecuador, Burma, Nigeria, Canada, and Angola, as well as in the United States, including Alaska and here locally in Richmond, California; and,

WHEREAS, From 1964 to 1992 Texaco (now Chevron) built and operated oil exploration and production facilities in the northern region of the Ecuadorian Amazon, and systematically dumped 18 billion gallons of toxic waste directly into the rainforest, and Chevron is a defendant in a class-action lawsuit in Lago Agrio, Ecuador where thousands of rainforest dwellers are seeking clean-up damages; and,

WHEREAS, A court-appointed expert in the Lago Agrio trial in Ecuador recently issued a report to the judge recommending that Chevron be held liable for damages of up to 16 billion dollars, representing the cost of environmental remediation as well as an “unjust enrichment” penalty for the billions of dollars saved by Texaco (now Chevron) by deliberately using inadequate environmental controls in Ecuador; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron has been implicated in a disturbing pattern of threats and corruption in the environmental trial out of Ecuador, and the contractual ties between Chevron and the Ecuadorian military strongly suggest that Chevron is responsible for the surveillance and threats against plaintiffs’ representatives, which were in some cases perpetrated by identified military officers; and,

WHEREAS, The intimidation of the plaintiffs has become so intense that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, has granted a petition requesting precautionary measures from the Ecuadorian government, the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, has written a letter to the Ecuadorian government urging it to prosecute the perpetrators and protect the plaintiffs and their legal team; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron is accused of polluting land and water resources in its ongoing operations in the Niger Delta, and four Nigerian plaintiffs are suing Chevron in San Francisco federal court over a 1998 incident in which Nigerian military and police paid by Chevron and using Chevron helicopters shot and tortured villagers who protested Chevron’s oil activities in the desperately poor Niger delta; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron’s activities in Richmond, California have been the subject of ongoing controversy. The EPA reported almost 300 pollutant spills from Chevron’s Richmond refinery from 2001 to 2003 alone. These are highly toxic, often cancerous chemicals spilling directly into residential communities. The EPA lists the refinery in “significant noncompliance” for air pollution standards and toxic flaring is a regular occurrence. Deadly accidents are a far too common occurrence, including massive explosions and fires. Richmond’s cancer and child-asthma rates exceed area, state and national averages; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron’s 2007 SEC 10K tax filing states that the company intends to continue the “design and engineering for a project to increase the flexibility to process lower API-gravity crude oil” at its Richmond, California refinery. Lower API-gravity crude is heavy crude which is more laden with toxins and pollutants. Chevron is telling Richmond residents that it does not intend to burn heavier crude in Richmond. Chevron has refused to embrace new, cleaner technology in Richmond. Heavier grade crude oil will require more heat and pressure and result in more pollution, potentially increasing dangerous emissions from the refinery by an estimated 800 tons per year, according to Communities for a Better Environment. Chevron is currently expanding its production in heavy crude areas such as the tar sands of Canada; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron has been an early and eager profiteer of the Iraq war. Representatives of Chevron took part in the Cheney Energy Task Force meetings that included the close investigation of Iraq’s oil fields and oil productive capacity. Chevron was one of the first corporations to win marketing contracts

for Iraqi oil following the war. Chevron has continued regular negotiations with Iraq in pursuit of contracts while the Bush administration pressures the Iraqis to pass the Iraq Oil Law that would all but privatize Iraq's oil system, opening at least two-thirds of Iraq's oil to foreign companies with 20-35 year contracts. If the Bush administration and Chevron are successful, the U.S. military will likely be mired in Iraq for decades; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron is a leading producer in the Alberta tar sands and currently has plans to spend an additional two billion dollars to expand its tar sands production. Mining and extraction of the Alberta tar sands has extreme environmental and social costs. Tar sand production generates almost three times more global warming pollution than does conventional oil production; and,

WHEREAS, Chevron, through its takeover of Unocal in 2005, is a partner with the military regime of Burma in the notorious Yadana natural gas pipeline project which involved mass forced labor and other human rights abuses, committed by the army on Unocal's behalf. Moreover, Chevron Corporation is one of the largest foreign investors in Burma. Their Yadana project funnels tens of millions of dollars to the regime, money the military needs to retain its stranglehold on power; and

WHEREAS, The devastation of the May 2, 2008, tropical cyclone Nargis natural disaster, was compounded by the criminal negligence of Burma's military regime, the refusal to allow relief aid and workers prompt access, and going through with the May 10th election during this tragedy while criminalizing opposition to the referendum. Burma's military regime relies heavily on the oil and gas sector to sustain itself in power. In its latest report, the New York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) pointed out that billions of dollars generated by the oil projects in Burma, which involved at least 27 companies from 13 countries, helped to fund the military without bringing benefits to ordinary people. California-based U.S. oil giant Chevron is one major player cited in the HRW list. This foreign investment provides a crucial source of support to the junta, allowing it to ignore demands that it returns Burma to civilian rule and end human rights abuses. The regime earned approximately \$2.16 billion in 2006 from the Chevron's investment, Yadana Gas Pipeline project that channels Burma's gas to Thailand, allowing the regime to tighten its grip on the power greatly oppressing its people and the opposition forces; and,

WHEREAS, In 2002, the Angolan government fined Chevron two million dollars for oil spills from a pipeline that polluted beaches and damaged fishing in the Cabinda region; and,

WHEREAS, in Pandacan, Philippines, oil depots partially owned by Chevron threaten the health and safety of over 84,000 residents. In February 2008, following a deadly tanker explosion, the Philippine Supreme Court reaffirmed its decision to uphold a city ordinance forcing closure and relocation of the oil depots, citing the need to protect residents from "catastrophic devastation." Despite community opposition to the depots, Chevron has yet to comply; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco condemns Chevron Corporation for a systematic pattern of socially irresponsible activities and complicity in human rights violations that is at odds with the values of the citizens of San Francisco, and at odds with the standards of ethical conduct those citizens expect from corporations based in the Bay Area, in our own communities, as well as abroad.