



Questions from the Community about Pyrolysis Oil Processing

Below are responses to questions raised by our community. We will provide any changes or updates as we continue to work with the EPA on the prospect of processing pyoil at the refinery.

Updated 8/15/23

In February 2023 ProPublica published an article that referenced a process that EPA approved at the Chevron Pascagoula Refinery involving pyrolysis oil. What is pyrolysis oil and what is the process referenced in the article?

Pyrolysis is the process of thermally breaking down plastics back into a hydrocarbon feedstock. That feedstock can then be run at the refinery recycling it into plastics or other products.

The EPA approved our using pyrolysis oil, or pyoil, as a feedstock under specified conditions as part of an advanced recycling program. We safely completed a short trial period about a year ago and processed minor amounts of pyoil, but have not processed any since.

The article mentions cancer risks in association with the pyoil process. Are people in Pascagoula at a 1 in 4 risk of cancer as the writer claims?

No. The EPA confirmed in [an April 28 letter](#) that processing pyoil at our Pascagoula refinery would not create a 1 in 4 cancer risk, and that "estimated refinery risks are not high relative to traditional fuels."

The 1 in 4 cancer risk referenced in the February ProPublica report was not for those living near the Chevron refinery in Pascagoula—it was for an unrealistic worst-case exposure scenario at airports. EPA has now confirmed that airport scenario would never actually occur, and it expects actual worst-case risks will be "vastly lower". In an August 2023 article, ProPublica acknowledged that processing pyoil at the Pascagoula refinery would not expose nearby communities to an extraordinary cancer burden.

Will Chevron be making the pyrolysis oil onsite?

Chevron will not make the pyrolysis oil feedstock onsite.

Will the sensors that Chevron currently has in place in Pascagoula be capable of monitoring emissions from processing pyoil? Will new sensors be required to detect new types of emissions that aren't currently being monitored at the refinery?

Chevron will not need new sensors. The safety equipment and processes that are in place today for our current feedstocks are the same ones applicable to this pyoil feedstock.

Even so, the EPA noted in its response that it plans to require companies submitting new pyrolysis oil chemicals for EPA review to conduct additional testing for impurities that could be present and ongoing testing to ensure that any variations over time in the source of pyoil do not introduce new impurities.

The EPA has [proposed rules](#) regarding additional testing related to the processing of pyoil. The agency is currently seeking comments about those rules and the related testing through August 19th.

What did Chevron's monitoring show during the trial period when pyoil was running through the refinery?

The refinery functioned normally, and emission levels while processing the pyoil remained normal.

When this article came out, Chevron didn't provide a response locally for weeks. Why didn't the community hear from Chevron sooner?

We thought it would be appropriate to let the EPA comment as the risk analysis that was taken out of context was from the EPA. The [EPA's April 28th response](#) explains the inaccuracies of the article and that processing pyoil at our Pascagoula refinery would not create a 1 in 4 cancer risk.

That said, we could have responded sooner at a local level, and we are committed to providing more timely information to our community. A primary way we intend to keep our community updated is through our [Pascagoula refinery website](#). We welcome suggestions from our friends and neighbors about topics of interest that we could provide more information about online. We've been proud to be a part of the Pascagoula community for 60 years, operating safely, providing energy locally and abroad, and providing for our friends and families. Whatever the future holds for this refinery, we will continue to operate it safely for our workers and our community.