

# Oil Center Foes Fearful Of Disaster

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The inevitability of disaster—sooner or later—was the keystone of objections to a proposed petroleum depot voiced at a Fairfax City hearing that ended early yesterday.

The citizens' predictions of fire or explosion; water or air pollution, followed the assurances of experts retained by oil companies that the most advanced safety measures would be taken in the design and operation of the depot.

The proposed installation is a 7.7-million-dollar "inland bulk plant" that four oil companies—Gulf, American, Texas and Cities Service—want to construct on a 116-acre site across Rte. 236 from the new Woodson High School in a predominantly residential area.

It would be a distribution center for the sales area between Baltimore and Richmond and would be supplied by a pipeline that is owned jointly by the four companies and five others.

Opponents to the proposal pointed out that three hours of testimony regarding safety precautions were presented at the City Planning Commission hearing that ended after 1 a. m.

Thomas H. Riggs, a quality controls specialist who objects to the depot, warned the need for safety precautions in industry is based on the premise that "anything that can happen will happen sooner or later."

Witnesses argued that the installation will be a safety hazard by virtue of its fire and explosion potential. They also warned of water and air contamination by industrial wastes, and of traffic congestion. They questioned the advisability of constructing the facility so near the new high school as access to both the school and plant would be from the same road.