



Special Offer **\$1 for 8 weeks**

neighborhood would triple with new deal



Large trucks hauled goods along Harbor Drive and Cesar E. Chavez Parkway in Barrio Logan Tuesday. The Port of San Diego will consider approving a new tenant, a cement warehouse, at its Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal in Barrio Logan. Local health and environmental advocates say it will triple the amount of diesel trucks that drive through the neighborhood. (Nelvin C. Cepeda/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Environmental health advocates want the port to require a cement company to use zero-emission trucks to hold down pollution in Barrio Logan

By ANDREA LOPEZ-VILLAFANA

DEC 8, 2020 10:44 PM



SAN DIEGO — The vote for a new port project that would triple the number of heavy-duty trucks rolling through a San Diego portside community was postponed on Tuesday, following concerns from environment advocates about increased pollution in an area already burdened by poor air quality.

During a more than three-hour discussion, the port's governing authority held off on approving a cement storage and distribution facility at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal, adjacent to Barrio Logan and south of downtown.

Port of San Diego commissioners asked staff to develop clear and measurable zero-emission truck requirements for the project.

"This is not just some project that's coming along, this is a project that will have massive impact on diesel truck trips through this community," said Commissioner Michael Zucchet.

Mitsubishi Cement Co. seeks to build a warehouse and hauling facility that could store and distribute up to 600,000 metric tons of cement annually.

Proponents say having a local cement resource would help meet current and future demand in the region.

"(T)he Mitsubishi project has the potential to greatly benefit the region's construction industry by helping to lower the cost of development projects such as affordable housing, expansion of the rail and trolley system, redevelopment of Terminal One at the San Diego Airport, and many more projects," Tracy Spahr, spokeswoman for the Port of San Diego, said in an email Monday.

Advocates and local community groups opposing the project want the port to require Mitsubishi to use zero-emission trucks to reduce the additional pollution in nearby neighborhoods.

A study conducted for the port found that it is not currently feasible to require zero-emission trucks, but the feasibility could be reviewed periodically.

“We won’t be able to require zero-emission trucks right off the bat, but over time this technology will become a normal part of Mitsubishi operations and really all truck of operations,” said Joel Valenzuela, maritime director for the Port of San Diego, during the meeting.

Barrio Logan has been identified by the state as having high levels of pollution, as well as other surrounding portside communities such as National City.

Pollution concerns in Barrio Logan

Advocates want the Port of San Diego to require Mitsubishi Cement Corporation's truck fleet to be 30 percent electric by 2023 and 100 percent by 2030. If nothing changes, the fleet could increase pollution in an area already troubled with poor air quality.



Advocates say area industry and diesel truck traffic contributes to health issues, including asthma, which is common among the area's residents, and this project would worsen those issues.

“If the port is serious about ZEV (zero-emission vehicles) and believes that this isn't feasible when the operations are scheduled to begin, then please delay those operations until it is feasible and not continue to have the community bear this burden,” said Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health Coalition, during the meeting.

California recently adopted new regulations that would require every new truck sold in the state to be zero-emission by 2045. The shift would help the state meet its climate goals as trucks are the largest source of vehicle air pollution, according to the California Air Resources Board.

On average about 148 truck trips occur daily now at the Tenth Avenue terminal near Barrio Logan. Another 82 daily truck trips occur at the port's National City Marine Terminal.

The Mitsubishi Cement Corp.'s project would add 176 to 296 new truck trips per day at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal, according to The Port of San Diego's environmental impact report.

The number of truck trips would depend on the amount of business the company generates, said Spahr.

The company has committed to purchasing trucks that are no more than 5 years old, which are designed to reduce diesel emissions.

According to the environmental impact report, when in operation, Mitsubishi should use one or more zero-emission trucks to evaluate the “capability” of such trucks to transport cement.



Large semi trucks hauling goods, drive along Harbor Drive and Cesar E. Chavez Parkway in Barrio Logan on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020 in San Diego, CA. (Nelvin C. Cepeda/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

“We will continue to work with the port to utilize clean, emerging technology when practical,” said Michael Jasberg, president and chief operating officer of Mitsubishi Cement Corp.

Advocates with the Environmental Health Coalition argued that the port needs to take a more aggressive approach.

They said they would like the port to develop a measurable strategy that would require Mitsubishi to convert its heavy-duty fleet to zero-emission by 2030.

The Environmental Health Coalition created its own timeline that would require the company to install electrical charging facilities in 2021 and require at least 30 percent of its fleet to be electric by 2023, with a 10 percent increase each year until 2030.

About 27 local community and environmental advocacy organizations expressed support for the coalition's strategy.

More than 25 Barrio Logan residents called in during the meeting to oppose the project. Residents shared the impact of truck traffic on their family's health and safety.

Barrio Logan's community planning group voted in November to recommend that the port incorporate the coalition's zero-emission strategy into Mitsubishi's environmental impact report and conditional lease agreement.

SAN DIEGO

LOCAL

LATEST

TOP STORIES

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

BUSINESS

ENVIRONMENT

BARRIO LOGAN



Top headlines by email, weekday mornings

Get top headlines from the Union-Tribune in your inbox weekday mornings, including top news, local, sports, business, entertainment and opinion.

SIGN ME UP

You may occasionally receive promotional content from the San Diego Union-Tribune.



Andrea Lopez-Villafaña



Show Comments

SUPPORT OUR JOURNALISM

SUBMIT A STORY TIP

REPORT A PROBLEM WITH THIS STORY

MORE FROM THIS AUTHOR



SAN DIEGO

Advocates: San Diego's Black residents face worsening house ownership disparities because of COVID

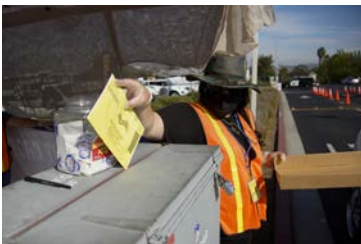
Dec. 9, 2020



SAN DIEGO

Little libraries across San Diego neighborhoods provide books, cheer during pandemic

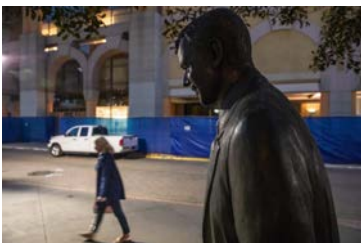
Dec. 6, 2020



POLITICS

Even with near-record voter turnout across San Diego, some neighborhoods fell behind

Dec. 5, 2020



SAN DIEGO

Statue of Gov. Pete Wilson returned to downtown San Diego

Dec. 2, 2020

SAN DIEGO

San Diego's downtown business group spreads holiday cheer across dozens of streets

Dec. 2, 2020



SAN DIEGO

San Diego's Paving Great Futures honors graduates of work readiness, leadership programs

Nov. 30, 2020



MORE IN THIS SECTION

POLITICS

Campbell selected new San Diego council president in 5-4 vote over Montgomery Steppe

Pivotal job that sets council's agenda, committee assignments

Dec. 10, 2020



POLITICS

Gloria sworn in as San Diego's first mayor of color, first openly gay mayor

Five new members also sworn in to City Council, creating 8-1 Democratic majority

Dec. 10, 2020



EDUCATION

San Diego Unified may cut \$155 million from budget, approves 370 early retirements

District projects budget cuts for next year while not knowing how much state and federal funding it will get

Dec. 9, 2020



POLITICS

San Diego OKs \$2.6M regional bicycling center at Liberty Station

Supporters call proposed center 'a gathering place for all things bicycle'

Dec. 9, 2020



POLITICS

San Diego approves \$450K for once-a-decade redistricting panel

Money will help nine-member panel redraw council district boundaries to reflect new census data

Dec. 8, 2020

POLITICS

San Diego signs contract with new ambulance provider, a key step toward making switch

New deal, which comes after years of complaints about weak response times, must get City Council OK next year

Dec. 8, 2020

[Load More](#)

[MOST READ LOCAL STORIES >](#)



1 Drive-through holiday lights return to Del Mar Fairgrounds

Nov. 3, 2020

2 Main Street project in El Cajon is moving along

Dec. 10, 2020

3 Carlsbad approves job protection for furloughed hotel workers

Dec. 9, 2020

4 Could you live here? Decades-old redlining still shapes San Diego's neighborhoods today, advocates say

Sep. 11, 2020

5 Opponents of charter school appeal to county to overturn approval

Dec. 7, 2020

6 State awards \$106 million for San Diego County rail projects

Dec. 10, 2020

7 Encinitas council members sworn in

Dec. 10, 2020

8 Advocates: San Diego's Black residents face worsening house ownership disparities because of COVID

Dec. 9, 2020

FROM OUR COMMUNITY PAPERS



Heebner sworn in as Solana Beach mayor

LIFESTYLE

Build A Miracle work continues virtually for local volunteers

17 minutes ago

NEWS

Retired tribal judge from Encinitas to lead North Dakota ethics commission

27 minutes ago

NEWS

La Jolla Parks & Beaches board decides to ask city to ban wood and charcoal fires at Barber Tract beaches

35 minutes ago

NEWS

Encinitas gives initial approval to new density bonus housing regulations

2 hours ago

NEWS

Meet Joel Allen, Point Loma High School's new football coach

Dec. 11, 2020

NEWS

Recreation Center playgrounds reopen after brief closure caused by state coronavirus order

Dec. 10, 2020

NEWS

La Jolla Rec Center renovation plans get conceptual approval from Community Recreation Group

Dec. 10, 2020

NEWS

Delkin Devices' toy drive raises almost \$74K

Dec. 10, 2020

NEWS

Encinitas council members sworn in

Dec. 10, 2020



Connect with us

Subscribe to email newsletters from the Union-Tribune about news, sports, business, opinion and more. Also sign up for our community newspaper newsletters, and CaregiverSD.

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Sign Up For Our Newsletters](#)

Follow Us



