

Toxinformer

Environmental Health Coalition

Volume 23, Issue 3

August, 2004

Victory in Colonia Chilpancingo!

*Community celebrates
Metales y Derivados
cleanup agreement*

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Join the EHC voter registration drive
and give San Diegans a voice in
decisions that affect our future!

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Environmental Health Coalition

Working for a Toxic-Free San Diego
1980-2004

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Environmental Health Coalition

Organizing for Justice

Environmental Health Coalition is dedicated to environmental and social justice. We believe that justice is achieved when empowered communities act together to make social change. We organize and advocate to protect public health and the environment threatened by toxic pollution. EHC supports efforts that create a just society which foster a healthy and sustainable quality of life.

The Border Environmental Justice Campaign (BEJC) works in solidarity with social justice groups in the border region to promote worker and community right-to-know about the chemicals used by the maquiladoras, to increase their capacity to influence conditions that directly affect their health, and to demand cleanup of abandoned and contaminated sites.



The Clean Bay Campaign (CBC) unites workers, bayside communities, and conservationists to clean up, restore and protect San Diego Bay as a clean and healthy multi-use water resource capable of supporting a diverse range of activities.

The Research and Community Assistance Program responds to the needs of residents by providing scientific, technical, and policy information and assistance, and empowering residents with appropriate and effective strategies.

The Toxic Free Neighborhoods Campaign (TFN) works with affected residents to promote land use and planning reforms, the relocation of hazardous industries to industrial zones, and the reduction of toxic air contaminants released by industry.



The Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning (CeCLP) works with community residents, housing advocates, health officials, and government agencies to eliminate the sources of lead exposure in San Diego County.

STAY INFORMED! BECOME A MEMBER OF EHC TODAY!

Yes, I want to become a member of EHC. I am enclosing my tax-deductible membership contribution of:

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Victory at last!

Community celebrates Metales y Derivados cleanup agreement

Plan meets demands for public participation

Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) and its Tijuana affiliate, the Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental, joined Mexico's top environmental minister, the governor of Baja California, and the mayor of Tijuana on June 24 in finalizing an agreement for comprehensive cleanup of a toxic problem that has plagued Colonia Chilpancingo residents for more than a decade.

"Today, Secretary Alberto Cárdenas Jiménez of Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), Governor Eugenio Elorduy Walther, and Mayor Jesús González Reyes visited Metales y Derivados and saw for themselves the horrific toxic waste dump next to our community," Lourdes Luján, a Colectivo organizer and resident of Colonia Chilpancingo, told the crowd on hand for the signing ceremony. "Our years of efforts to call attention to the poisoning of our community, and our demand for community participation in the development and implementation of a comprehensive cleanup plan have succeeded."

Secretary Cárdenas named Metales y Derivados his number one toxic site cleanup priority for 2004. The agreement commits the Mexican government to a five-year timeline for comprehensive cleanup of the site. Two officials of SEMARNAT, the Director of the State's Ecology Department, and two members of the Colectivo signed the agreement.

The agreement establishes a joint community and government Working Group to plan and monitor the cleanup process. The group is composed of representatives of EHC, the Colectivo, SEMARNAT, PROFEPA (the enforcement arm of SEMARNAT), Office of Ecology, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Urban Development, the Institute of Public Health Services, the municipal government of Tijuana, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to the agreement, the Working Group is charged with overseeing the Metales y Derivados cleanup project with a "deadline of five years for the conclusion of the complete remediation of the site."



"We welcome the willingness of government officials to work with us to achieve a comprehensive cleanup, and thus defend Colonia Chilpancingo and the San Diego/Tijuana border region's right to a healthy and safe environment," said Magdalena Cerda, Community Organizer with EHC's Border Environmental Justice Campaign. "The participation of the affected community with government from beginning to end of the process will build confidence for this and other groups seeking justice in working together in the future."

Stage One to be completed by November

Secretary Cárdenas announced that \$700,000 from a variety of sources, including \$85,000 from the U.S. EPA, has been designated for carrying out the first of four stages of the remediation project. The first stage, initiated in July, will be completed within four months. This stage involves the removal and transport of 2,500 tons of toxic material to a hazardous waste confinement facility in Kettleman Hills, California. Under the La Paz Agreement, hazardous waste must be returned to its country of origin. Metales y Derivados recycled batteries from the U.S., thus the waste is being returned here.

CLEANUP, continued from Page 3

Hazardous waste including lead, arsenic, cadmium and antimony contained in disintegrating drums, bundles, and piles will eventually be removed in stage one. As of July 19, the first load had been delivered to its final destination.

Metales y Derivados a NAFTA failure

The Metales y Derivados abandoned lead smelter stands just 150 yards from Colonia Chilpancingo, home to more than 10,000 people. It began operating in 1972, and was closed in 1994 by Mexico's PROFEPA, the law enforcement arm of SEMARNAT, due to emissions release and hazardous materials handling violations. The person responsible for the company, José Kahn, fled Mexico after a warrant was issued for his arrest in 1995 for alleged environmental crimes. Kahn, who currently lives in San Diego, left behind almost 24,000 tons of mixed hazardous waste, including 7,000 metric tons of lead slag exposed to the elements. No cleanup funds have

been provided by the smelter's parent company, San Diego-based New Frontier Trading Corporation, which continues to operate.

'Our years of efforts to call attention to the poisoning of our community, and our demand for community participation in the development and implementation of a comprehensive cleanup plan have succeeded.'

~ Lourdes Luján

A 1998 petition filed with the environmental oversight commission of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by EHC and Colonia Chilpancingo prompted a report released in February 2002 validating community health concerns about the toxic contamination from Metales y Derivados. Independent analysis by experts cited in the report confirmed the need for urgent action to halt adverse health effects on people living or working in proximity to the unsecured, hazardous site. No cleanup of the site resulted, however, since the NAFTA commission has no enforcement mechanism.

"Metales y Derivados is the landmark case demonstrating the failure of NAFTA to protect the environment," said Amelia Simpson, Director of EHC's Border Environmental

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EHC launches new Committee for Fair Trade

Environmental Health Coalition's Border Environmental Justice Campaign in July launched its Committee for Fair Trade. The Committee is building alliances between EHC members and allies to strengthen the local movement in opposition to new trade agreements being negotiated with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as a flawed model.

NAFTA has undermined basic mechanisms that protect the wellbeing of our society, including environmental protections, labor standards, and democracy. EHC believes that all trade agreements between nations should include, at a minimum, the following five trade principles:

- Enforceable environmental protections
- International Labor Standards
- Precedence to citizen's rights over investor rights
- Defense of democracy through transparency and public participation
- Transference of economic resources to reduce inequality between trading partners

Jorge Osuna, BEJC Policy Advocate/Community Organizer, is the primary contact for the Committee.

Meetings are bilingual, and participants from both sides of the border include educators, workers, activists, and representatives from San Diego WTO Alert, United for a Fair Economy, Sierra Club, and the Red de Apoyo a la Maquila.

The Committee is supporting BEJC's Campaign for Fair Trade by gathering postcard "votes" opposing the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and engaging in other outreach activities in anticipation of upcoming trade votes in Congress.

The goal of the Committee is to persuade elected officials to vote no on expanding NAFTA throughout the hemisphere through CAFTA and the FTAA, and to raise awareness of the critical importance to our border region and globally of replacing trade agreements like NAFTA with fair trade.

The Committee meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the EHC conference room. For more information, contact Jorge Osuna at (619) 235-0281, ext. 118 or email JorgeO@environmentalhealth.org

CLEANUP, continued from Page 4

Justice Campaign. “The trade agreement, rather than contribute to Mexico’s capacity for addressing environmental problems, exacerbated problems by bringing more industry and pollution without providing resources to compensate for Mexico’s lower budget for the environment. In 1999, the US had \$27 per capita to spend on the environment, while Mexico had only \$11. NAFTA encouraged industries to move operations to Mexico, without creating any enforcement mechanism to compel those industries that pollute to clean up their toxic waste.”

More flawed trade deals in the works

Negotiations are currently underway to expand NAFTA to 34 countries of the hemisphere in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the Free Trade Area of

the Americas (FTAA). Modeled after NAFTA, CAFTA and the FTAA also lack enforceable environmental protections.

The lack of resources for NAFTA-related environmental cleanup concerns Colonia Chilpancingo residents. The \$700,000 in funds secured so far for remediation of the Metales y Derivados site is inadequate even for minimal cleanup.

“The Metales y Derivados cleanup should be funded fully and without delay, in order to secure justice for this community,” said Andrea Pedro Aguilar, who moved away from her home directly downhill from the Metales y Derivados site after EHC tests showed that her children suffer from lead poisoning.

“We are glad that some funding has been designated for the site, but it falls far short of the minimum of \$7.2 million needed to complete the job.”

Chronology of the Metales y Derivados Case

1972

New Frontier begins lead smelting operations to recover refined lead and copper in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, under the name of *Metales y Derivados*

March 1994

PROFEPA permanently shuts down *Metales y Derivados* after non-compliance with environmental laws. Approximately 7,000 metric tons of lead slag are abandoned at the premises, along with metal scrap, polyethurine chips, sulfuric acid residue, and traces of cadmium and phosphorous.

1998

Residents of Colonia Chilpancingo and the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) file a petition with NAFTA’S Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) concerning *Metales y Derivados*.

June 12, 2000

Residents of Colonia Chilpancingo and EHC hold a press conference in front of the offices of the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente Recursos Naturales y Pesca (SEMARNAP) to call for an immediate response to the problem while at the time, at a meeting of the CEC in Dallas, Texas, a representative of the community presents 500 letters signed by residents of Colonia Chilpancingo to Julia Carabias, head of SEMARNAP.

July 2001

800 letters signed by residents of Colonia Chilpancingo are sent to President Fox and Víctor Lichtinger, the new head of the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT).

July 17, 2001

Residents of the Colonia, Mexican and US supporters and allied groups, and EHC, hold a demonstration in front of the offices of New Frontier Trading Company in San Diego.

February 2002

The CEC makes public its factual record on the *Metales y Derivados* case corroborating community concerns that toxic substances at the site represent a “grave risk to human health.”

April 10, 2002

Colonia Chilpancingo residents form a citizens community action group, the Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental. EHC, the Colectivo and supporters from Mexico and the US hold a 24-hour vigil in front of the PROFEPA offices in Tijuana to demand the immediate cleanup of Metales and Derivados.

May 16, 2003

The Colectivo presents to the public its own cleanup plan demanding its immediate implementation.

March 27, 2004

EHC and the Colectivo meet with officials from EPA, SEMARNAT, PROFEPA, Baja California state Ecology as well as Infrastructure and Urban Development, who agree to establish a Working Group with the Colectivo to plan and carry out a comprehensive cleanup of the Metales site.

June 24, 2004

The Colectivo signs an agreement with the Mexican government formalizing the formation and commitment of the Working Group to achieve a comprehensive cleanup of *Metales y Derivados* within 5 years, and to initiate the first of four stages immediately.

Bill to protect children from toxic treats passes Senate Health Committee

Legislation that will protect kids from consuming lead-contaminated candy moved one step closer to passage on August 11, as the California State Senate Health Committee voted 7 to 2 in favor of Assembly Bill 2451. The bill was co-authored by Environmental Health Coalition, and State Assemblymembers Antonio Firebaugh and John Longville. As of *Toxinformer* press time, AB2451 was scheduled to go to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for review in late August.

“Our legislators are sending a message to candy manufacturers that we will not tolerate lead in these candies,” said Leticia Ayala, Director of EHC’s Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning. “We would like to thank Assemblymember Antonio Firebaugh, Senator Deborah Ortiz and the other members of the Senate Health Committee who supported this bill.”

The passage of AB 2451 represented the latest victory in a long battle for children’s health. In July, a previous lead-in-candy bill sponsored by Assemblymember Juan Vargas and EHC, AB2297, fell victim to corporate lobbyists and inaction of legislators to act in the best interests of children. Powerful corporate interests, including the Grocery Manufacturers of America, California Paint Council, Kraft Foods, Hershey Food Corp., and the California Manufacturers and Technology Association vigorously opposed AB2297. A coalition of Mexican candy manufacturers also weighed in heavily against the bill. The bill failed to gain approval of a majority of the Senate Health Committee, falling one vote short of the seven votes needed.

The bill was supported by EHC, California Nurses Association, City of Chula Vista, Los Angeles Unified School District, Western States Legal Center on Poverty and the Environment, Planning and Conservation League, Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice and Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition.

Following the failure of AB2297, Assemblymember Longville offered to revise one of his existing bills, and worked quickly with Assemblymember Firebaugh to deliver AB2451 to the Senate Health Committee. Current law does not require the Department of Health Services to test candy that may be contaminated with lead. According to citations in the Health Committee staff analysis, over 112 brands of candy, most coming from



Mexico, have tested with dangerous levels of lead over the past decade. The state has estimated that as many as 15 percent of lead poisoned children in the state have eaten leaded candy—about 1,000 children a year. According to records in Orange County, candy was suspected as a source of lead poisoning nearly as often as paint. Statewide, 75 percent of lead-poisonings are Latino children.

Toxic treats

Lead poisoning is the number one environmental health threat to children under 6-years-old. Among other things, exposure to lead causes reproductive harm, including miscarriages and birth defects; developmental harm in children, including low IQ; and cancer.

In April, the Orange County Register reported that more than 100 brands of candy sold in California, most of them from Mexico, have tested positive for dangerous levels of lead in the past decade. In nearly every case, the candy — mostly marketed to Latino kids — stayed on store shelves and no action was taken to protect children’s health. According to the results of the *Register’s* two-year investi-

CANDY, continued from Page 3

gation, the state has detected lead in candy in one out of four tests.

"Clearly, these candy manufacturers knew that their products had tested positive for lead, but they continued to make money at the expense of children's health," said Leticia Ayala, Director of EHC's Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning. "Their actions are simply unacceptable."

In 2001, EHC's community Promotoras collected Mexican candies from a variety of local stores in San Diego and sent them to the California Department of Health Services (DHS) for testing. In July 2002, DHS released tests showing two brands of Mexican candies contained excessive levels of lead. These candies were not removed from store shelves.

Candies contaminated with lead present an unacceptable health risk to children, and should have been removed from store shelves immediately. But more than a year after the DHS test results, many of these poisonous candies are still readily available to children in San Diego communities.

The manufacture and consumption of contaminated candy is also poisoning many children in Mexico, according to the *Register*, which tested blood lead levels in children.

"Ultimately what we want is for the problem to be fixed at the source, and for manufacturers to provide candies that are safe for children on both sides of the border," Ayala said.

For updates on AB 2451 and other childhood lead poisoning prevention news, join the EHC Action List. To sign up, visit www.environmentalhealth.org

Lead-Safe Housing Ordinance heads for City Council Vote

Lead Poisoning is still the number one environmental health threat to children under the age of six, and lead paint found in many of the aging housing units in San Diego's low-income communities of color represents the main source of exposure.

On August 4, the City of San Diego Land Use and Housing Committee unanimously approved sending the Children's Right to Lead-Safe Housing Ordinance to the City Council. The ordinance was developed by the City's Lead Poisoning Prevention Citizen's Advisory Task Force, which includes Environmental Health Coalition and is co-chaired by District Six Councilmember Donna Frye and District Eight Councilmember Ralph Inzunza. It now goes to the City Council for a vote in September.

Scott Peters, District One Councilmember and chair of the Land Use and Housing Committee, said, "The tragedy of lead poisoning is that it is one of the most preventable pediatric health problems in our country today. Its effects are permanent and rob kids of their intellect and future. It is critical that we raise awareness about the problem and ensure that we provide an environment that affords every

child the ability to develop to their full potential."

Leticia Ayala, Director of EHC's Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning, applauded the committee members and thanked Frye and Inzunza for their leadership of the Task Force. "Without their support, we couldn't have gotten this far," she said.

If approved by the Council, the ordinance will result in a preventative and proactive strategy to make all pre-1978 housing in San Diego lead-safe. The ordinance will:

- **Require Prevention:** Peeling lead-based paint will be a municipal code violation requiring increased inspections and repair to prevent the poisoning of children.
- **Protect ALL Children in Rental and Owner-Occupied Homes:** Landlords and homeowners will be required to repair lead hazards.
- **Protect Workers:** Establishes clear standards and guidelines for handling lead-based paint and bans unsafe work practices.
- **Increase Enforcement:** Strengthens the enforcement ability of city landlords and owners refuse to comply.

TAKE ACTION!

Contact Mayor Dick Murphy and the San Diego City Council and urge their support for the Children's Right to Lead-Safe Housing Ordinance.

Mayor Dick Murphy
(619) 236-6330 dickmurphy@sandiego.gov

District 5 Brian Maienschein
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District 7 Jim Madaffer
(619) 236-6677 jmadaffer@sandiego.gov

District 3 Toni Atkins
(619) 236-6633 toniatkins@sandiego.gov

District 8 Ralph Inzunza
(619) 236-6688 rinzunza@sandiego.gov

Chula Vista, Port to review EHC-backed option for Mid-Bayfront Development

Environmental Health Coalition and its allies celebrated a successful first step in planning of the Chula Vista Mid-Bayfront on May 25 as Amended Option C – a land use plan adopted by the Citizens Advisory Committee convened by the City of Chula Vista and the San Diego Unified Port District – was selected as the primary development option to be analyzed for the 400 acres coastal site.

A coalition of organizations including EHC, IBEW Local 569, South Bay Greens, San Diego Audubon Society, HERE UNITE Local 30, San Diego Baykeeper, Friends of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuges, SWIA, and Surfrider Foundation presented a unified position for the Chula Vista City Council and the Port District and the more than 200 attendees at the hearing. The final action resulted in the inclusion of additional elements from EHC's own community planning efforts.

Laura Hunter, Director of EHC's Clean Bay Campaign,

said the Amended Option C land plan includes many positive attributes for the community and the environment including a land-trade provision (swapping between private and public lands to provide appropriate locations of land uses), large park buffers for habitat protection, greatly enhanced public open spaces, a focus on job creation, uses that will encourage sustainable energy development, and removal of all residential from the sensitive Sweetwater District. This option presents a solid opportunity to create a development that works economically, benefits the community and preserves the Bayfront's environmental integrity, she said.

EHC and its allies will continue to be actively engaged in the planning process to ensure that appropriate densities and development guidelines and policies are adopted. For updates on the planning process, join EHC's Email Action List at www.environmentalhealth.org.

Chula Vista adopts plan to provide electricity *EHC will work to ensure plan includes clean, renewable resources*

On June 23, the City of Chula Vista voted to implement Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), which will allow the City to provide electricity to consumers within the City's boundaries. Environmental Health Coalition played an active role in supporting the City's efforts, working with other environmental groups, energy experts, and organized labor to build community support for the plan.

What is CCA?

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is the process by which a local government replaces an existing Investor-Owned Utility (IOU), like San Diego Gas & Electric, as the provider of electrical power to its constituents. The supply can be a power plant or renewable energy resource, or it can be provided through a third-party supplier that either owns or purchases power on the open market. The Community Choice Aggregator, in this case the City of Chula Vista, negotiates the purchase of electricity while the IOU (SDG&E) continues to transmit and deliver that electricity through its existing system.

In order to retire old, inefficient, and polluting power plants like the South Bay Power Plant there must be the demand for the development of clean, renewable energy and conservation measures. The CCA can provide this opportunity.

"Chula Vista will not only realize great long-term savings in the cost of electricity, but will also have the

historic opportunity to purchase and develop a substantial amount of its own energy that is clean and renewable, while creating quality jobs for the City's residents," said Albert Huang, Policy Advocate for EHC's Clean Bay Campaign.

Chula Vista now must develop an implementation plan to phase-in CCA. EHC will play a crucial role in ensuring that the plan considers the input of community members, and has requested that the City create a community stakeholder group committee to provide public input to the drafting the plan.

For more information about the CCA and other Clean Bay Campaign activities, contact Albert Huang at (619) 235-0281 or email AlbertH@environmentalhealth.org. For email updates on this and other EHC activities, join the EHC Action List at www.environmentalhealth.org

Did You Know?

The South Bay Power Plant draws in and sterilizes roughly 600 million gallons of bay water every day. This figure represents about 20 percent of the water in the South Bay. Marine plants and animals also are drawn into the cooling system, where they are killed and poisoned.

Community planning process moving forward

EHC's Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Community Action Team is moving forward with its efforts to secure a new community plan for Barrio Logan, despite a setback in the planning process.

Since February, EHC has participated in land use planning workshops with consultants from the City of San Diego in an attempt to develop the basis of a new community plan. But in June, the planning process met with opposition from local industries, San Diego Unified Port District representatives, and property owners, some of whom had participated in the prior workshops and had expressed no opposition to the process.

CAT team member Luís Ocegueda said members are viewing the comments of the opposition as an opportunity to address more of the concerns of the community and further educate residents about the needed changes in Barrio Logan. CAT members are working to make sure the developing plan addresses issues like traffic, incompatible land use, indus-

trial/residential zoning, access to San Diego Bay, affordable housing, and precautionary approach to development by addressing existing and potential health risks associated with poor urban planning.



EHC Community Organizer Randa Baramki, right, discusses community organizing with CAT member Monseratt Hernandez.

Randa Baramki, EHC's new Community Organizer, said the team also will be working to educate residents more about the planning process itself, and quell fears and misconceptions about the plan that were raised during the June meeting.

"Our plan is to revise the vision maps developed in the workshops, and do aggressive outreach and education this fall to develop support for the plan across a broad range of the community," she said.

Major developments and changes in land use and traffic are taking place in Barrio Logan, and EHC is working to

develop a plan that addresses the community's environmental justice problems. For more information or to get involved, contact Randa Baramki at (619) 235-0281, ext. 103 or email RandaB@environmentalhealth.org

County relocates air pollution monitor to Barrio Logan

Environmental Health Coalition for years has been advocating for policies that will reduce Barrio Logan residents' exposure to air toxics. But documenting what's in the air has always been a problem without a nearby air monitor. In 2001, the County and the California Air Resources Board temporarily placed air-monitoring equipment in Barrio Logan to identify the source of air toxins like chromium 6 that had been found in the neighborhood. The staggering levels of chromium 6 discovered near the Master Plating chrome plater lead the county to prosecute the business for environmental law violations, which resulted in a complete shut-down of the operation.

Now, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors has approved a request from Supervisor Greg Cox to move an air pollution monitoring station into Barrio Logan.

The monitor will most likely be placed at Perkins Elementary School, at the request of EHC and the community.

The County's Air Pollution Control District monitors air pollution levels in the region using ten monitoring stations strategically placed around the County. Data from the relocated monitor will be helpful in looking at the overall air quality issues in Barrio Logan. The monitor will measure smog-precursor pollutants and levels of fine particulate matter.

Paula Forbis, director of EHC's Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign said it's not clear at this point whether sampling to detect toxics like chromium 6, and elemental carbon, an indicator of diesel pollution, will be conducted at the monitor. EHC will advocate to have them added.

Did You Know?

On many blocks in Barrio Logan, polluting industries are located just a few feet from residences. Some 210 industries with regulated hazardous materials or wastes coexist with the Logan area's 29,000 residents in about 3 square miles. Of these industries, 129 are located in Barrio Logan, an area less than 1.2 square miles.

EHC welcomes new staff

EHC continues to expand its environmental justice campaigns in the San Diego/Tijuana region. This month, we welcome four new staff members.

Pilar Arballo joins EHC as Director of Voter Empowerment and Leadership Development. Pilar is heading up EHC's voter registration and education efforts this fall.

Randa Baramki adds her skills to the Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign as a Community Organizer II. Randa is working with the Barrio Logan Community Action Team to organize support for a new Logan Area Community Plan.

Jorge Osuna joins the Border Environmental Justice Campaign in the role of Policy Advocate. Jorge serves as the primary contact for BEJC's new Committee for Fair Trade.

Michelle Lisa Rodriguez joins the EHC Administration Team in the role of Executive Assistant. Michelle is responsible for assisting the Executive Director and Admin Team in EHC fiscal and managerial tasks.

Goodbye and Good Luck

Nohelia Ramos, Clean Bay Campaign Organizer, and **Jason Baker**, EHC's Media Relations/ Communications Associate will be leaving EHC this August.

The EHC staff and Board of Directors would like to extend our gratitude and best wishes to Nohelia and Jason in all their future endeavors.

More than 610,000 eligible people in San Diego County are not registered to vote.

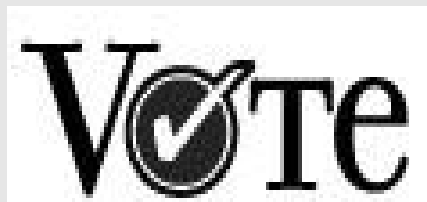
Join the EHC voter registration drive and help give San Diegans a voice in decisions that affect our future!

Everyone wants clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, land use practices that protect neighborhoods and families, safe and affordable housing, deserves a living wage, and uses public services like schools, streets and highways.

But not everyone realizes that the power to choose who makes the decisions affecting these issues comes down to one simple act: **Voting!**

Every Saturday in September and the first three Saturdays in October, EHC will be registering eligible voters in neighborhoods throughout San Diego. Help us give a voice to the people in our communities. It only takes three hours, and your efforts will make a difference on Election Day

Call Pilar Arballo at (619) 235-0281, ext. 119, to sign up



Register to Vote – Your future depends on it!

Lots of Americans don't bother to vote. They think it's a hassle, they don't know how to do it, or they feel that their vote won't make a difference. In fact, in San Diego County, there are more than 610,000 eligible people who are not registered to vote.

Truth is, government at all levels has a big effect on our lives. Voting is a way to say what's important to you, and say it straight to the politicians and government officials. Voting gives you a feeling of being part of America and your community.

Every day, elected officials make decisions that affect our lives. For example:

- If you care about clean air or clean water, it is the government at all levels that makes the rules that control pollution.
- If you have family in another country, and would like them to come to the U.S. to visit or immigrate, the federal government controls whether they get to come here or not.
- If you're going to college or hope to go to college, government scholarship and loan programs can make the difference in whether you're able to afford school.
- The federal government steers the economy. That can affect whether jobs are easy to find or hard to find.
- If you have kids in public school, you want them to get a good education. In this case, it's the local government and school board that run the show.

With so much depending on government, it makes sense for you – and your family and friends – to let the government know what you want it to do. And Election Day is the one of the best times to do that. That's when all the politicians are paying attention.

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Some people think there's no point in voting because their one vote won't make a difference. But many elections are decided on very few votes. In the 1993 race for San Diego City Council District 8, less than 9,000 people voted – out of approximately 50,000 registered voters. Neither leading candidate got a majority of the votes, and the winner, Juan Vargas, won by only 501 votes. From there, Vargas went on to win two more City Council terms, and was elected to State Assembly.

Even if the person you vote for doesn't win,

your vote still makes a difference, because it shows there was support for another point of view. Not only that, politicians pay attention to who votes and who doesn't. Politicians don't know who you voted for, but they do know whether or not you voted. They track information for statistical purposes to determine what groups to

target in order to win elections.

Young people and new U.S. citizens have not voted in high numbers in recent elections, so some politicians feel they don't have to pay much attention to their needs. If you fit either of these groups, registering to vote and voting can change that.

Voting is also one of the few times when all Americans are equal. Remember, it was not long ago that women and people of color were not afforded voting rights. Many Americans died in the struggle for the right to vote.

The deadline to register to vote in the November election is October 18, 2004. For information about registering to vote, contact Pilar Arballo, EHC Director of Voter Empowerment and Leadership Development, at (619) 235-0281, ext. 119 or email PilarA@environmentalhealth.org

EHC also is looking for volunteers to register potential voters in the following areas: Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, Barrio Logan, Grant Hill, National City and west Chula Vista. Spanish speakers are a plus but not required, and training is provided. Contact Pilar for more information.

**AFTER YEARS OF MEETINGS, PETITIONS,
ORGANIZING, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND
DEMANDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE . . .**



**WE CELEBRATE THE
CLEANUP of
METALES y DERIVADOS!**

**DESPUÉS DE AÑOS DE REUNIONES,
PETICIONES, ORGANIZAR, MANIFESTACIONES,
Y DE EXIGIR JUSTICIA AMBIENTAL . . .**



**¡CELEBRAMOS
LA REMEDIACIÓN
DE METALES Y DERIVADOS!**