

Toxinformer

Environmental Health Coalition

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South Bay Power Plant: The End is Near



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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION

Fighting Toxic Pollution
Protecting Public Health
Promoting Environmental Justice
1980-2010

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EHC

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 works to reduce toxic pollution caused by maquiladora industries in Tijuana and to promote fair trade and globalization for justice.



THE CLEAN BAY CAMPAIGN works to cleanup, restore and protect San Diego Bay and bay tidelands from industrial and Naval polluters and development activities.



THE TOXIC FREE NEIGHBORHOODS CAMPAIGN organizes in communities of color to advocate for the prevention of toxic pollution from industrial and mobile sources.



THE CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING works to eliminate sources of lead exposure to protect children's health.

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:

- \$25 \$100
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www.environmentalhealth.org

Environmental health describes the interrelationships between the environment and human health, particularly how pollutants in the environment adversely affect our health.

These interrelationships may be complex, but for large numbers of people of color and people from low-income households, the problems are obvious, as are many of the solutions.

For Maria Martinez and her children, this means getting polluting industries out of Barrio Logan; for Diana Vera it means tearing down an outdated power plant in Chula Vista that has polluted her community for 50 years; for residents of Colonia Chilpancingo in Tijuana, it means rerouting diesel trucks that pollute the community and the environment of nearby schools.

Large numbers of people of color and people from low income households live in these areas, and are exposed to higher than average levels of air pollution, both indoors and outside. Studies in hundreds of cities in the U.S. and around the world show a strong link between elevated particulate levels and premature deaths, hospital admissions, emergency room visits, and asthma attacks.

Asthma: Chronic and Deadly

Asthma is a serious problem in our society. It kills about 4,000 people a year and was estimated in 2007 to cost \$19.7 billion in medical care and lost time from school and work. Asthma is the leading chronic childhood illness in the United States and the leading cause of school absen-

teeism. Asthma deaths and the number of Americans diagnosed with asthma continue to increase each year.

The 2008 San Diego County Asthma Report Card issued by the San Diego Regional Asthma Coalition shows that 9,186 people in San Diego County visited the emergency room for asthma illness in Fiscal Year 2005-2006. Residents of the Central and South Regions of San

In this issue, you will read about EHC's work to improve the environmental health of our communities, particularly by reducing exposure to air toxics.

Diego County were more likely to visit an emergency room for asthma, and Blacks and Hispanics were more likely to visit for treatment. During the year, 20.7% of children with asthma visit an emergency room or urgent care for asthma, and young children were more likely to visit than older children and adults.

San Diego County had 2,087 asthma hospitalizations in 2005. The County's hospitalization rate is 70 per 100,000 residents. Central and East Region residents have higher hospitalization rates for asthma, with Blacks more likely to be hospitalized. Young children, women, and the elderly also have higher hospitalization rates for asthma.

Central Region residents have the highest rates of death from asth-

ma. Rates are highest among adults over age 65, and Blacks have the highest asthma death rate among race/ethnic groups.

Air Toxics: Cutting Life Short

Asthma is just one of the chronic illnesses linked to air toxics. Particulate matter, including diesel particulate, slows children's lung growth rate, makes asthma worse and causes cancer, heart disease, and higher death rates. Premature deaths linked to particulate matter are now at levels comparable to deaths from traffic accidents and second-hand smoke. One of the most dangerous pollutants, fine particulate matter – for example from diesel exhaust - not only bypasses

the body's defense mechanisms and becomes embedded in the deepest recesses of the lung, but also can disrupt cellular processes. Research from the California Air Resources Board shows that each year, air pollution leads to 8,800 premature deaths, 7,700 hospitalizations, 210,000 respiratory illnesses, 1.4 million lost work days and 4.7 million school absences in the state.

EHC's work on land use (creating buffers and providing more open space), the reduction of diesel particulate matter from trucks and ships, and removal of polluting power plants are all measures that when successfully implemented will greatly reduce exposure to air pollutants linked to asthma and other diseases linked to air toxics.



The South Bay Power Plant impacts public health, the environment and contributes to unhealthy air quality that plagues our communities.

End of the South Bay Power Plant on the horizon

November 10, 2009 should have been a landmark day for South Bay communities and San Diego Bay. It should have been a day of celebration and speeches ushering in a new era of renewal for the Chula Vista Bayfront. The South Bay Power Plant operator, the regional water quality authority and the state energy agencies all promised that by November 10, 2009, the polluting clunker would have shut down its operation.

Sadly, it did not happen. But hope for the end of the South Bay Power Plant is on the horizon.

On December 16, members of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board said they would consider revoking the South Bay Power Plant's water discharge permit. Without this permit, the power plant

would no longer be able to operate. A hearing will be scheduled to review the issue in March 2010.

“Once again, the Board members stated clearly that they want to hear the issues and evidence about the power plant. They unanimously voted to set a hearing for March which is what we asked for,” said Laura Hunter, Associate Program Director for Environmental Health Coalition.

“Get ready for 2010-- the year the power plant will finally cease operations!”

Environmental Health Coalition and our allies will be asking the Regional Board to rescind the extended permit early in 2010 before the plant damages marine life for another year. No date for the March hearing has been set, but EHC will update you with all the information as it becomes

available.

Cooling that Kills

In September, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board responded to the demands of EHC and dozens of elected officials, community residents, and activists calling for an end to the South Bay Power Plant's assault on the environment. Following lengthy public testimony in opposition to the renewal of the plant's water pollution discharge permit, the board directed its staff to set a date for a public hearing to decide whether or not to renew the plant's pollution permit

The board's own study shows that the plant's use of San Diego Bay water for “once-through” cooling kills billions of fish larvae and millions of sea creatures when operating at full capacity. The hot water dis-

charge contaminated with pollution during 50 years of operations has fundamentally altered the marine ecosystem in the South Bay. The power plant is one of 19 in California that uses a “once-through cooling system” which is widely known to be environmentally destructive.

“This facility is an anachronism. It shouldn't be there,” Richard Wright, chairman of the water board, told the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

The End of ‘Must-Run’

Just weeks later, the California Independent System Operator told Dynegy, which leases and operates the power plant, that “must run” status on two of its four generators would not be renewed and that the two generators would be decommissioned at the end of 2009. The *Union-Tribune* reported that ISO officials also have said that reliance on the remaining generators could come to an end in March or April, as more power sources come online.

In January 2008, the ISO said the power plant could be decommis-



Courtesy Steve Breen, *San Diego Union-Tribune*

sioned if certain new energy projects were constructed. Since then, an Otay Mesa plant, which came online in October 2009, and more peaker plants have been built meeting the local need. The requirements have been met, but the plant has still not been decommissioned, Hunter said.

“We need the ISO to release the whole plant,” Hunter said. “It's time.

This community has been patient. It's time for the ISO to pay attention to the impacts their decisions have.”

The antiquated South Bay Power plant impacts our health, the environment and the local economy. Its pollution contributes to unhealthy air quality that plagues our communities. Its inefficient technology will cost San Diego rate payers \$50 million this year - for power that doesn't always stay in the region. Until this plant's “must-run” status is lifted, or the water permit is terminated, environmental justice for South Bay communities and long-awaited plans for parks, hotels and economic development on the bay front remain beyond reach.

“We know there are better alternatives,” said Chula Vista Councilmember Pamela Bensoussan. “This is a perfect time to focus our attention on new strategies to meet our energy needs in a way that is local, more reliable, more sustainable, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

EHC and the South Bay communities would like to thank the following elected officials for their support.

Congressman Bob Filner
 State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny
 Assemblymember Marty Block
 Assemblymember Mary Salas
 County Supervisor Greg Cox
 Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox
 Chula Vista Deputy Mayor Rudy Ramirez
 Chula Vista Councilmember Pamela Bensoussan
 Chula Vista Councilmember Steve Castaneda
 Chula Vista Councilmember Mitch Thompson
 City of San Diego Council President Ben Hueso
 Imperial Beach Councilmember Patricia McCoy
 Imperial Beach Councilmember Jim King
 Coronado Councilmember Barbara Denny

Extreme Home Retrofits coming to San Diego

Environmental Health Coalition is excited to announce that after months of organizing and advocacy, the San Diego City Council in October passed a pioneering suite of programs under the federal energy stimulus package that offer a mix of benefits for the City and broader community. The action was supported by the Green Energy and Good Jobs Alliance.

San Diego is poised to become one of the first large cities in the country to retrofit homes citywide, with a special emphasis on retrofitting homes and providing job training in low income communities. These retrofits will save residents money, add value to the home, improve the health of residents, reduce our carbon footprint and create sustainable, family-supporting green-collar jobs.

The Council adopted the full list of recommendations submitted by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Committee. Chaired by Councilmember Frye and Mayor Sanders, it was a committee created as a result of advocacy by the Alliance.

The Council also wisely saw the need for continued oversight and vigilance over the design and implementation of these cutting-edge programs. The Mayor has promised extensive public involvement and input, and the Council promises to take a hands-on leadership role as needed. Everyone appears committed to making these programs successful.

Nicole Capretz, Director of Environmental Health Coalition's



San Diego City Councilmember Donna Frye, left, joined Diane Takvorian and Nicole Capretz of EHC for a press conference with the Green Energy/Good Jobs Alliance.

Climate Justice Campaign said, "We are proud of the Mayor and Council for taking a strong stand to combat climate change and jumpstart a new green economy with real, sustainable jobs. While we are entering into uncharted territory, we are also setting the groundwork for a new chapter in San Diego's economic and environmental history."

The council action includes:
 \$250,000 to develop an updated Climate Action Plan
 \$3 million for a low-income home retrofit program with required audits, education and upgrades
 \$1.5 million for a home retrofit program with no income requirements
 \$2.5 million for a revolving loan fund for energy projects
 \$2 million to retrofit City street lights; and
 \$2 million for energy efficiency upgrades to Balboa Park buildings

The Green Energy / Good Jobs Alliance is a coalition of community, environmental and labor organizations working to create a thriving local green economy that reduces greenhouse emissions, improves air quality, protects public health, provides opportunities and benefits to all neighborhoods, and creates family-supporting career-track jobs.

Alliance members and organizations supporting the council action include: Environmental Health Coalition, Coalition of Neighborhood Councils, AIA COTE-San Diego Chapter, Sierra Club-San Diego Chapter, San Diego CoastKeeper, San Diego Imperial-Counties Labor Council, GRID Alternatives, and City Heights Community Development Corporation.

EHC awarded U.S. EPA CARE grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded Environmental Health Coalition a \$300,000 grant to support our Clean Ports, Healthy Communities project in San Diego over the next two years.

EPA's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) is a competitive grant program that offers an innovative way for a community to organize and take action to reduce toxic pollution in its local environment. CARE grantees work to implement solutions to reduce releases of toxic pollutants and minimize people's exposure to them. By providing financial and technical

assistance, EPA helps communities get on the path to a renewed environment.

EHC will use the funds to work for reduction in diesel emissions and exposure to pollutants caused by incompatible land use. A primary goal is the adoption of community plans in Barrio Logan and Old Town National City that recognize the significant hazards associated with homes and schools in close proximity to pollution sources.

EHC Executive Director Diane Takvorian and Campaign Director Georgette Gomez attended the 2009 CARE National Conference in

October in New York City. Mathy Stanislaus, EPA Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response, gave the keynote address and said: "Environmental sustainability is important to our health, to our economy, to overall quality of life and well-being.

The CARE program ensures that all of our partners – government, local organizations, business, academia, and especially community members – have key roles in making our communities healthier. The CARE program gives us a way to work together to achieve healthy sustainable communities."

National City tackles Environmental Justice in General Plan

National City on October 20 became the first city in California to include Environmental Justice as a full element of its general plan.

"We're proud to be setting the pace for other communities throughout the state to look at Environmental Justice issues and use Environmental Justice as a framework to address quality of life issues in our communities," said National City Vice Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis.

This decision is a victory for Environmental Health Coalition and community residents who have worked tirelessly to reduce the health impacts in Old Town National City. "This is an important next step in continuing the work we have done to address health hazards in National City. We will strengthen the health focus of our planning efforts as the city continues to move



forward," said Councilmember Rosalie Zarate.

The City Council voted to include a Health and Environmental Justice Element to better address the way land use practices affect community health. The amendment means that the city is committed to a

healthy and brighter future for all of its residents.

A general plan guides land use and development decisions for the physical development of a city. National City's general plan was last updated in 1996.



More than 1.4 million trucks cross the US/Mexico border each year. Truck traffic routinely fills Colonia Chilpancingo's small streets.

School children exposed to deadly diesel exhaust

Children attending schools in the Tijuana community of Colonia Chilpancingo are exposed to high levels of diesel particulate matter, according to research conducted by Environmental Health Coalition and Chilpancingo residents. Exposure to diesel exhaust is associated with serious health hazards including cancer, asthma and heart problems.

From December 2008 through April 2009, EHC and its Tijuana affiliate, the Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental, conducted air quality sampling and traffic counting at three school sites, Nicolás Bravo/Emiliano Zapata elementary school and the Ana María Berlanga Kindergarten in Colonia Chilpancingo, and the State Secondary School No. 89 in Colonia Campestre Murúa, and at a control site in a residential area on

a side street in Colonia Chilpancingo. The sampling is the first step in developing a community-driven action plan to reduce truck traffic adjacent to the schools.

EHC staff and 27 members of the Colectivo and its Youth Group conducted the air sampling in front of the schools using hand-held P-Trak Ultrafine Particle Counters. Sampling team members also counted heavy-duty diesel trucks, cars, vans, taxis, city buses, pickup trucks, and water delivery trucks during each sampling session.

Analysis of the data showed that traffic volumes and ultrafine particulate levels are higher at all three school sites than at the control site. The highest level measured was 370,666 particles per cubic centimeter at the Kindergarten.

The Colonia Chilpancingo neighborhood is adjacent to the largest industrial park in Tijuana, less than one mile from the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. More than 1.4 million trucks cross the border each year, representing two-thirds of all commercial truck traffic crossing the entire California-Mexico border. Trucks routinely use the Chilpancingo neighborhood's small residential streets to cross Tijuana.

Fifty percent of the trucks counted during sampling bore both U.S. and Mexican license plates, indicating they are licensed to operate on both sides of the border and are likely servicing the maquiladora industry. Shortcuts past the Kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools save drivers time and fuel, but there are existing main arteries surrounding the neighborhood to the

Summary of Particle Counts

School Site	AM or PM	Average Particle Count	Level at Control Site
Kindergarten	AM	45,815	25,670
Kindergarten	PM	48,516	19,891
Elementary	AM	13,208	7,838
Elementary	PM	10,284	7,334
Secondary	AM	23,150	7,890
Secondary	PM	39,639	19,877

north, south, east and west, which are appropriate routes for maquiladora trucks to take.

Reducing truck emissions at the target sites will improve the health of over 2,000 school children at the three schools, as well as their family members who deliver and pick up students, school staff, and those who

live or work along the same blocks.

Add your name to the petition!

Join our call to reroute trucks driving past the schools in the Colonia Chilpancingo/Murúa neighborhood. Log on to www.environmentalhealth.org and take action now!



Colectivo Chilpancingo pro Justicia Ambiental members Guadalupe Luján, left, and Ana Langarica monitor truck emissions near their homes in Colonia Chilpancingo, Tijuana.

Border Briefs

- Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras Board President and BEJC Director Amelia Simpson welcomed Ernesto Lizcano, a worker from TRW in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, to the Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental office on October 10, 2009. He spoke about the international struggle to defend the rights of 600 workers at the U.S.-owned company's auto safety belt maquiladora factory in Mexico.

- Amelia Simpson and Magdalena Cerda participated in the annual coordinator's meeting of the binational environmental agency Border 2012 on October 28. They addressed the importance of community participation in one of the successful support projects of Border 2012 - the Metales y Derivados Tijuana toxic site cleanup - and offered recommendations for the future direction of the program.

- In August and October, Youth Group Coordinator Aníbal Méndez and members of the Youth Group joined other grantees of the San Diego Foundation for Change in workshops to exchange information and build cross border solidarity.

EHC congratulates Port Commissioner Steve Padilla

The Chula Vista City Council on September 29 appointed former Chula Vista mayor Steve Padilla to the San Diego Board of Port Commissioners. Former Commissioner Mike Najera resigned on May 15, and Padilla will serve the remainder of the term. Environmental Health Coalition supported Padilla's appointment and congratulates him on the victory.

Padilla's priorities include getting the South Bay Power Plant decommissioned and getting power lines near the bayfront removed. He also emphasized his commitment to completing the environmental review process and reinvigorating the Chula Vista Bayfront plan. EHC looks forward to working with Commissioner Padilla to create a healthier community for all South Bay residents.



Port Commissioner Steve Padilla talks with Maria Moya, left, and Luz Palomino of EHC.

IS YOUR HOME SAFE FOR YOUR CHILDREN? HAS YOUR CHILD BEEN TESTED FOR LEAD?

The City of San Diego *Lead Safe San Diego Program* Offers Free Help

Who qualifies?

Low-income families residing within the City of San Diego • Renters and owner-occupied homes •
Homes built before 1979 • Homes with deteriorated paint

Free Services

Housing lead inspection/assessment • Repairs of identified lead hazards • Blood lead level testing for children •
Lead dust cleaning • One-on-one in-home lead training

About the Program

The Lead Safe San Diego Program is funded by grants from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Lead poisoning is the number one environmental health threat to children under the age of six. Lead poisoning causes irreversible health problems like brain damage, reduced IQ, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities.

For more information contact EHC Organizer Luz Palomino at (619) 474-0220, ext. 141 or email LuzP@environmentalhealth.org

EHC welcomes new board members, says thanks to outgoing members



(Back row, left to right) Dan McKirman, Secretary/Treasurer; Clarice Gaylord, Vice-President; Sharon Kalemkiarian, Ruth Heifetz, David DiDonato, Margaret Godshalk, President; José Medina, Tony Pettina, Treasurer Emeritus; Maria Martinez, Carmen Gutierrez Hernandez, Enrique Medina

(Seated, left to right) Yeni Linqui, EHC Staff Representative; Jay Powell, Beatriz Barraza, President Emerita; Jean Costa, Lorena Gonzales (not pictured)



EHC thanks outgoing board members Jay Powell and Jean Costa and welcomes new board members David DiDonato, José Medina, Enrique Medina, Maria Martinez, Carmen Gutierrez Hernandez, and Yeni Linqui.

EHC also welcomes Margaret Godshalk (right) as President of our Board of Directors. We offer our most sincere thanks to outgoing president Beatriz Barraza, (left) who now serves as President Emerita.



EHC Donor Appreciation Luncheon

On October 29, EHC held our first Donor Appreciation Luncheon to say thank you to our top contributors and announce plans for our 30th Anniversary Celebration. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the event a success!

Almuerzo en agradecimiento a los donantes de EHC

El 29 de octubre, EHC llevó acabo el primer almuerzo en agradecimiento a los donantes para darles las gracias a nuestros contribuidores de alto nivel y anunciar los planes para la celebración de nuestro trigésimo aniversario. ¡Gracias a todos los participantes y por lograr que este evento haya sido un éxito!



San Diego City Councilmember Donna Frye and EHC Executive Director Diane Takvorian. *Donna Frye miembro del concilio de la ciudad de San Diego y Diane Takvorian, directora ejecutiva de EHC*



Tom and Beverly Casey



Betsy Gill



Lee and June Welsh

EHC Open House

On November 5th, EHC opened our office for an Open House to share food, fun, and information about our programs with potential EHC members. Thank you to everyone who attended. We can't wait to see you again!

Casa Abierta de EHC

El 5 de noviembre, EHC abrió sus puertas para compartir comida, diversión e información sobre nuestros programas con miembros potenciales de EHC. Gracias a todos los que asistieron. ¡Esperamos verlos pronto!



EHC Promotora Leonor García



EHC Promotora Martha Cortéz



One of the many young community members in attendance helps EHC Organizer Yeni Linqui with a raffle prize drawing. *Uno de los muchos jóvenes de la comunidad que asistieron, le ayuda con la rifa a Yeni Linqui, organizadora de EHC*