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Barrio Logan residents on B & C defeat: “We will never give up the fight”

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By Pablo J. Sáinz



Supporters fought to the bitter end. Photo Courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition.

Even though the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update was repealed in this week's elections when Propositions B and C were rejected in a citywide vote, Barrio Logan residents and environmental activists have a clear message: The fight for a healthier, cleaner Barrio Logan isn't over.

"We have nothing to lose when we are being poisoned on the daily," said Brent Beltran, a Barrio Logan resident who was active in the Yes on B & C Campaign. "We have nothing to lose when our community has become a dumping ground for things affluent neighborhoods wouldn't stand for. We fight not because we like the fight. We fight because we have no other choice."

Community plan supporters also said that Barrio Logan deserves to have a community plan just like other areas in the city. More than anything, they said, the plan has to be implemented to improve children's health. The Logan Heights area has one of the highest rates of asthma among children and young people in the county. The community plan update would have created a buffer zone for maritime industry, with proper land-use zoning.

"Barrio Logan is my home and my district, and I will immediately begin working on a new plan to protect it," said Councilmember David Alvarez, who has long been a supporter of the community plan update.

The No on B & C Campaign, which supporters included Mayor Kevin Faulconer and maritime industry leaders, celebrated their victory, always putting emphasis in protecting jobs.

"The broad-based maritime coalition that opposed this Plan is pleased that voters agreed that we can do a better job of protecting regional jobs and the health of Barrio Logan residents," said Kevin Graney, vice-president of Operations for General Dynamics NASSCO. "We are all ready to work with Mayor Faulconer and Barrio Logan residents and businesses to make the needed improvements that will protect the future of the shipbuilding industry in San Diego and the residents of Barrio Logan."

But Barrio Logan residents like Beltran, have said they will continue to look out for the community, and it isn't very likely they will ever agree with maritime industry leaders.

"Residents of Barrio Logan will never compromise with the greedy, polluting maritime industry," Beltran said. "We will demand more stringent restrictions on their polluting businesses. We will fight them because we have no choice. Our existence is at stake."

Christian Ramirez, an immigration activist who lives in Barrio Logan, said that the defeat of Propositions B and C thanks to support by the maritime industry and other business-leaders, is part of a long historical pattern of the establishment ignoring Barrio Logan residents.

"Those who imposed the Coronado Bridge over the rubble of hundreds of demolished homes; those who left behind a community split in two with their super highway, those who cut down trees to saturate our community with junk-yards, those who condemn

thousands of children to the diseases of asthma and cancer, those who never tire of throwing poison into the life blood of Barrio Logan: we know who you are, we know your names," Ramirez wrote on Facebook. "The finger of history will continue to point to you until its last breath. Barrio Logan no se rinde, all the way to the bay."

Environmental Health Coalition, the organization behind the Yes on B & C Campaign, reassured Barrio Logan that they are not alone.

"Barrio Logan has been through decades of abuse and discrimination, and we are dismayed that the lies and misinformation of the corporation campaign were successful," said EHC Executive Director Diane Takvorian. "Every neighborhood deserves a healthy and safe community, and Barrio Logan is no exception. The community's goals, at the end of it all, will undoubtedly be triumphant, and we will work with City Council to ensure Barrio Logan gets the long overdue justice it deserves."

Beltran summed it up like this:

"We fight for all those that have dared to stand up against the impossible. We may lose battles along the way but we will never give up the fight."

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