

Toxinformer

Environmental Health Coalition

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Don't Pave Paradise!

Take action to oppose sprawling development on the Mid-Bayfront

Page 5



Toxinformer

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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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Name _____

Street _____

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Phone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Email: _____

Check enclosed Please charge my Visa Mastercard

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail to: EHC, 1717 Kettner Blvd., Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92101

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EHC, community demand smart-growth alternatives to sprawling Mid-Bayfront development plans

The struggle is on for the future of the last undeveloped area on San Diego Bay. And for those who care about Chula Vista, the future of the Bay's fragile ecosystem, and the effects of development on regional communities, the stakes are very high.

At greatest risk is the 125-acre site known as the Chula Vista Mid-Bayfront, which forms the northwest corner of Chula Vista. The site is located adjacent to the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and Chula Vista Nature Center. Now, a proposal for high-density, mixed-use residential development threatens to devastate the fragile ecosystem surrounding the site, and obliterate the last available open space accessible to western Chula Vista.

In April 2002, the Chula Vista City Council granted Pacifica Development Cos. exclusive rights for two years to purchase the Mid-Bayfront site and develop plans. The current Pacifica development proposal includes almost 2,000 residential units in multiple buildings between eight and 14 stories tall in the middle of the Mid-Bayfront site.

The impacts from the almost 4 million square feet of proposed development would be devastating to the Bay's already struggling ecosystem and would further overcrowd schools and highways.

"Dense, high-rise development will threaten the survival of the threatened and endangered wildlife species in the area. If this massive project is built, these fragile habitats will never recover to sustain wildlife populations—they will be further fragmented and much of the important wildlife value will be lost," said Laura Hunter, Director of EHC's Clean Bay Campaign.

There is much more at stake than the loss of habitat and open space. The Pacifica development proposal is a symptom of the lack of regional, smart-growth planning among municipalities in San Diego County and the exclusion of community input from the planning process. From the northernmost reaches of Oceanside to the southern San Diego/Tijuana border, San Diego County communities are plagued with the byproducts of poor planning: mixed-use zoning that allows industries and homes to be constructed side-by-side, traffic congestion, overcrowded schools, vanishing open space and a lack of affordable housing that has reached crisis proportions.

The Pacifica development plan stands to worsen existing problems. Consider:

- A recent study found that hospitalization rates for asthma are 23 percent higher in South Bay than the rest of the County. More car, truck and construction will only make a bad problem worse.
- Chula Vistans need and want more open space. The only large open space area left for western Chula Vista is the northern Bayfront.
- A residential project at this site will privatize the Bay, making it a playground for those wealthy enough to live there, but not for the rest of the residents. Western Chula Vista is gravely underserved for parks and open space areas.
- Schools near the site are already far over capacity and developer fees fall far short of the real costs per student.

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- Pacifica has a very poor labor record and busted a union in Los Angeles at a hotel with a long union tradition.

Environmental Health Coalition commissioned a scientific survey on Chula Vistans' views on Mid-Bayfront development.

"The Mid-Bayfront survey results support what EHC and community leaders have been saying all along," said Nohelia Ramos, Organizer of EHC's Clean Bay Campaign. "Chula Vistans do not want a massive residential development that devastates the the Bay's ecosystem and adds to the already existing problems the community faces. The community has spoken clearly and forcefully -- they want public open spaces and a voice in this decision."

Hunter said the survey results also put to rest the myths of liberal versus conservative and jobs versus the environment when it comes to development decisions.

"Sixteen percent of those surveyed said they are members of a union, yet 64 percent said that they support a development that would create higher-paying livable-wage jobs," Hunter said. "And even though 70 percent of the respondents consider themselves middle-of-the-road or conservative, the results still show a preference for low-level development and the protection of open space. This clearly shows that Chula Vistans oppose the process of 'business as usual' when it comes to development of the Mid-Bayfront. They want a project that will be a benefit to the entire community, not just another project that will destroy an irreplaceable natural resource and benefit only a handful of developers."

Don't Pave Paradise

Upon learning of the proposed development, EHC initiated the "Don't Pave Paradise" campaign, forming a strong coalition with environmental groups, labor, community residents and youth organizers to oppose "Bayfront Village," Pacifica's original development proposal. The massive residential development proposal included 3,400 residential units and six skyscrapers up to 24 stories. The proposed project would have brought an additional 25,000 daily car trips on already congested roads, an additional 6,000 residents, and would have taken more than 10 years to complete.

EHC and active Chula Vista residents successfully stopped Pacifica's first proposal and negotiated an agreement with Pacifica to support public hearings to allow residents to share their visions for the site. An EHC Community Action Team began working on community-based alternatives to the project. Organizers, including a large contingent of youth activists, canvassed the Chula Vista community and sought opinions from residents about the

site and what alternative development they would envision for the bayfront.

"Many of the people we talked to were surprised. They really had no idea what the City was planning for the Bayfront, and there was a lot of concern about the Pacifica proposal," said Irene Bueno, 16, a Junior at Chula Vista High School who has been very active in the "Don't Pave Paradise" campaign.

Input from two public meetings, along with a grassroots community survey of 300 residents, clearly showed community opposition to residential uses for the Mid-Bayfront site.

Chula Vistans Speak Out:

88 % support open space - Not Massive Development

Environmental Health Coalition commissioned a scientific survey on Chula Vistans' views on Mid-Bayfront development and released the findings on April 17. The results are clear: the overwhelming majority of Chula Vista residents oppose high-density housing development on the Mid-Bayfront. The survey results show an overwhelming preference for low levels of development, assuming that some level of development will occur on the site.

- 79 % of residents surveyed prefer minimal development or restoration of natural wildlife habitat that includes nature trails.
- 88 % favored parks, playgrounds and trails, while 74 % opposed residential condominium development.
- 36 % would develop only a portion of the Mid-Bayfront site and leave the remainder undeveloped; 31 % would prefer to keep the entire Mid-Bayfront site undeveloped.
- 79 % of those who prefer some development believed that half or less of the site should be developed
- 60 % expressed support for a hypothetical bond measure that would use public funds to purchase some of the site for wildlife habitat and park areas.
- Chula Vistans also expressed their strong support for good, livable-wage jobs as part of any development on the Mid-Bayfront. Should the Mid-Bayfront site be developed, 64 % of survey respondents said they supported the creation of jobs that would pay higher wages and offer benefits to employees.

Douglas S. Coe, Director of the San Diego State University Research Laboratory, conducted the survey. Survey results were compiled from English and Spanish interviews with 500 randomly selected Chula Vista residents. The results have a plus or minus 4 percent error margin.

The demographics of Chula Vistan's surveyed reflects the broad political and social spectrum of the City's residents. Thirty-eight percent of respondents considered themselves to be middle-of-the-road politically, 32 percent said they were conservative, and 20 percent considered themselves liberal. Forty-five percent of those surveyed described their ethnic background as Latino, 36 percent as Caucasian, 6 percent as Asian or Pacific Islander, 5 percent as African-American, 1 percent as Native American, and 7 percent as other than the listed ethnic categories.

Concern about the proposed devastation to the Mid-Bayfront, along with concerns that the City is failing to stem uncontrolled growth, has prompted a groundswell of resident opposition to a large private, residential development on the site. Many organizations have joined the Don't Pave Paradise Campaign including HERE Local 30, Center on Policy Initiatives, San Diego Audubon Society, South Bay Greens, California Native Plant Society, and hundreds of individuals have joined EHC to protect the Bayfront for future generations.

Sandy Duncan, an EHC member and 50 year resident of Chula Vista, said one of her top priorities is to ensure that any development on the Mid-Bayfront be one that protects the ecosystem and meets the needs of the entire Chula Vista community, not just a privileged few homeowners.

"We are very unhappy to think that City officials do not value the community's input on this project," Duncan said. "Why would we have a Nature Center and a Wildlife Refuge and then destroy it with all of this development?"

Share your vision for the Bayfront!

EHC and community residents are working for a project on the Chula Vista Mid-Bayfront that:

- Is appropriate, community supported, and environmentally protective;
- Will ensure that natural resources are fully protected and enhanced;
- Will create community open spaces and development areas for residents and visitors alike; and
- Will create jobs that will provide living wages and benefits and respect for the workers' right to organize so that new jobs will be a positive force in the local economy.

Please clip and send the letter below to the Chula Vista City Council to demand a community-based alternative to the sprawling Mid-Bayfront plan

Chula Vista City Council
 276 Fourth Avenue
 Chula Vista, CA 91910
FAX: (619) 691-5171

Re: Mid-Bayfront Development

Dear Mayor Steve Padilla and City Councilmembers:

I am a resident of _____ and I am writing to request that you support the following actions on behalf of the residents of the City of Chula Vista and the South Bay region.

Pacifica Development Cos. will be bringing its revised Mid-Bayfront development plan before the City Council soon.

I request that you:

- Respect public input and **oppose the development of 2,000** new residential units on the Mid-Bayfront;
- Support a plan that provides for at least 70- acres for a public open space park, wildlife habitat, and nature trails for the enjoyment of everyone;
- Require Pacifica Development Cos. to respect workers, provide good jobs and support the right-to-organize; and
- Support a plan that benefits the community, not just the developer.

I also request that you communicate your position in the form of a letter to the developer, Mr. Ash Israni of Pacifica Development Cos.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Name _____

Date _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

*Please fax or send a copy of your communications and any responses to Nohelia Ramos, Clean Bay Campaign Organizer, Environmental Health Coalition, 1717 Kettner, Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92101
 Phone: (619) 235-0281 ext 104, Fax: (619) 232-3670 or Email: NoheliaR@environmentalhealth.org*

EHC brings stories of grassroots organizing to WSF

Representatives from Environmental Health Coalition and activists from around the world gathered in Porto Alegre, Brazil this January for the third-annual World Social Forum. Connie García, Policy Advocate with EHC's Border Environmental Justice Campaign, Lourdes Luján, community promotora with EHC's Tijuana affiliate Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental, and Jaime Cota, EHC board

member and Director of the Center for Information for Women and Men Workers in Tijuana, joined more than 100,000 delegates representing 5,500 organizations from close to 200 countries for a week of networking with others opposed to corporate globalization and neo-liberalism, and discussions of proposals for a better world. EHC's representatives were part of the

"Grassroots Global Organizing" U.S. delegation, funded by The Funders Network on Trade and Globalization, Solidago Foundation, and other U.S. foundations.

The events organized around five basic themes: democratic sustainable development; principles and values, human rights, diversity and equality; media, culture and counter-hegemony; political power, civil society and democracy; and democratic world order, the fight against militarism and promoting peace. EHC's representatives led two workshops on environmental justice, labor rights, and trade issues, and participated as panelists in others.

"The World Social Forum is an international arena for the exchange of social and economic projects that promote the idea that 'Another World is Possible'. It provides a space for building global economic alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between non-governmental organizations, unions and social movements," García said.

Cota described the World Social Forum as a form of opposition to capitalism in its current stage of neo-liberal globalization.

"This is where the forum derives its importance and legitimacy," Cota said. "For our organization (CITTAC), Porto Alegre was a space for encounters, for the articulation of alternatives, for the exchange of experiences, ideas, concerns, problems, and for sharing issues."

The WSF developed out of a growing international movement that advocates for greater participation of civil

societies in international financial and trade institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). For decades, these institutions have been making decisions that affect the lives of people all over the world, without a clear system of accountability and democratic participation.

Each year, the leaders of the richest nations, together with the global corporate elite retreat to Davos, Switzerland to the World Economic Forum (WEF) to discuss the

global corporate agenda. Since 1971, the WEF has played a key role in formulating economic policies throughout the world. It is sponsored by a Swiss organization that serves as a consultant to the United Nations, and is financed by more than a thousand corporations.

"One of the biggest accomplishments of the third WSF was the fact that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio da Silva (Lula), after addressing an audience of 75,000 at the WSF, went to Davos where he addressed the World Economic Forum. This is of tremendous significance in the movement for global justice," García said. "Lula reminded those attending the World Economic Forum of the pain and suffering that their policies are inflicting around the world. He also challenged the World Economic Forum to establish a link with the World Social Forum, and to start a dialogue that includes social issues."

García said the unifying theme among all forum participants was a strong opposition to the U.S. war against Iraq. There also were many other issues that brought forum attendees together to denounce the U.S.-led policies that cause so much harm throughout the



EHC Board member Jaime Cota, left, and BEJC Policy Advocate Connie García share a laugh between activities at the 2003 World Social Forum.



Lourdes Luján talks with WSF participants about the struggles of Colonia Chilpancingo residents and their organizing efforts demanding cleanup of the Metales y Derivados lead smelter.

world. “The sentiments against the U.S. policies run deep throughout the world,” she said.

Sharing the struggle

Participation in the WSF was especially important for Lourdes Luján. On only her second trip away from home, the 30-year-old mother of three left her children in the care of their grandmother in Colonia Chilpancingo and took a brave step to help build the movement for social and environmental justice. Lourdes’ voice was an important contribution to the forum, as she speaks from experience with the impacts of globalization on her family and community, located in the shadow of an industrial park where multinational corporations operate with disregard for worker rights, public health or the environment.

During a workshop entitled, “From NAFTA’s Ground Zero: Testimonies of the U.S.-Mexico border after eight years of NAFTA,” Luján shared her testimony of organizing with EHC and the Colectivo for the cleanup of the abandoned Metales y Derivados lead smelter.

“The support from the people who attended this workshop motivated me very much. These people, without knowing me, showed me their support and solidarity. This showed me that we are not alone in the struggle. We in the Colectivo have learned that with support and solidarity, we can bring about change,” she said.

Room for improvement

Members of EHC’s delegation were not without suggestions on how the forum could improve to better serve its mission.

“The unwieldy size of the forum prompted discussions among participants on whether this is the proper venue to talk about alternatives to corporate globalization,” García said. “Many forum participants agreed on the need to continue to have these forums, but on a smaller scale. Smaller regional forums are more desirable since they provide a better venue for discussion of alternatives and the development of strategies.”

Luján’s experience also was impacted by the logistical problems faced by WSF organizers. “The schedules and programs were published in English and Portuguese only, and in many of the workshops, there was not translation, so I felt excluded. Translation is a must if indeed real participation is expected where all participants can share real experiences and talk about alternatives and strategies.”

Cota said he felt that many new global justice movements were not well represented at the forum. “However, this doesn’t take away anything from the value and importance that (the people and groups in attendance) represent for the movement at large,” he said.

But García said that despite the problems, the third WSF was an uplifting experience for EHC’s participants.

“One of the reasons I became a member of the U.S. Delegation Coordinating Committee was precisely to ensure that some of the people from Tijuana would have an opportunity to attend the forum. I consider Lourdes and Jaime’s participation in the forum a huge step in the right direction,” she said.

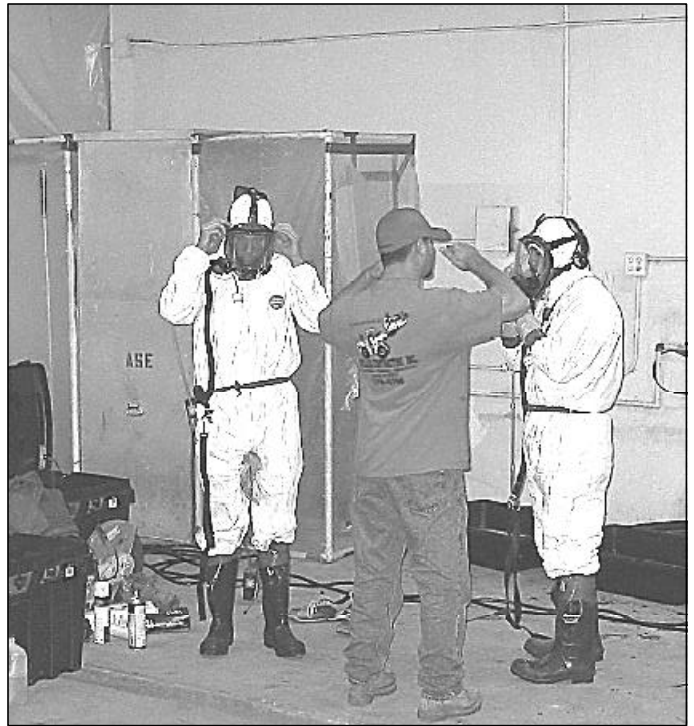
EPA steps up cleanup of Master Plating

Cleanup of hazardous material spills at the Master Plating site began in earnest in February, under the direction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund Emergency Response Unit. Preliminary soil and concrete samples taken inside the building by EPA in January revealed levels of chromium, copper, lead and nickel at levels well above hazardous waste limits. While chromium, copper, and nickel are substances that are common in plating operations, EPA officials say the source of the lead still is unclear.

The October 2002 shutdown of Master Plating – a metal plating shop that had been operating within a few feet of homes on the 2100 block of Newton Avenue since the late 1970s – ended a toxic history that included more than 150 violations of environmental and health regulations and two prosecutions of the business owner. In January 2002 EHC and Barrio Logan residents demanded the shutdown of the business after the California Air Resources Board and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District detected high levels of chromium 6 in the air near the plating company. Chromium 6 is a toxic air pollutant that can increase the risk of cancer even at very low levels.

Under EPA supervision, workers began the removal and disposed of soil and concrete that did not meet residential standards for hazardous materials. A vacuum system inside the structure maintains the inside air pressure to prevent leaks that could release contaminants into the community.

“To date, soil and concrete samples taken from neighboring residences have not shown levels of pollutants that



Workers clad in hazardous material suits and respirators prepare to remove contaminated soil and concrete inside the now closed Master Plating facility.

exceed residential standards, but EHC will be advocating for EPA to conduct additional sampling on these properties,” said Paula Forbis, Director of Environmental Health Coalition's Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign.

EHC, allies kick off ‘Taking Control of Our Neighborhoods’ campaign

In February, more than 30 community residents started the process of taking control of land use and development in the Logan area by attending workshops on community planning, affordable housing and environmental justice.

The series of three workshops, sponsored by Environmental Health Coalition, San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP) and the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC project), were designed to help community members analyze and understand the land use issues facing the Logan Area and develop the skills to actively participate in the decision making processes that affect their quality of life.

For the past 50 years, the City of San Diego has allowed mixed-use zoning in the Logan Area. One of the most damaging results is that businesses — like the recently shutdown chrome plater Master Plating — and other sources of toxic pollution are allowed to be located next to homes. The toxic burden caused by this zoning practice continues to impact the health of children and families in the Logan neighborhoods.

In addition to the health burdens of bad zoning, Logan residents now face a growing danger of displacement from their neighborhoods as property values and rents continue

to skyrocket, due in large part to redevelopment in downtown San Diego and a shortage of construction of new affordable housing units.

Since the 1980s, EHC has been demanding that the City work with residents to update the outdated Barrio Logan community plan that allows this unhealthy zoning practice. In 2002, EHC delivered 500 postcards to District 8 City Councilmember Ralph Inzunza, demanding the development of a new community plan for the Logan area. So far, despite verbal support for an update, there has been no action from Inzunza or other City officials.

We need YOU to Get Involved!

Join EHC, SDOP and MAAC Project in developing a community-led vision for the Logan Area that promotes environmental justice and affordable housing. For more information, contact Maria Moya or Hays Witt at (619) 235-0281 or email MariaM@environmentalhealth.org or HaysW@environmentalhealth.org

Vargas' new Bill addresses contaminated candy problem

Environmental Health Coalition's Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning continues to battle the recurring problem of Mexican candies contaminated with lead being sold in stores throughout California. The imported candies have widespread distribution and are popular in Latino communities like Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights and the South Bay communities like National City, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach and San Ysidro.

Now, a new bill introduced into the California legislature by 79th District Assemblymember Juan Vargas could aid the struggle by imposing strict legal penalties for the manufacture and sale of contaminated candy.

Under existing law, the State Department of Health Services (DHS) is responsible for enforcing the law that, among other things, prohibits the adulteration of food, or manufacturing, selling, delivering, holding or offering for sale any adulterated food. Under existing law, violation of these provisions is a crime.

State Assembly Bill 256, introduced by Vargas, would require DHS to create and maintain a program to monitor lead levels in all candy manufactured or sold in the state, including a sampling and testing program to determine the lead levels contained in the candy. The bill also would require the state to establish maximum allowable lead levels for candy.

Additionally, the bill would include in the definition of adulterated food any candy containing lead levels that exceed the maximum allowable level. By making the manufacture and sale of lead candy a crime under the definition of state law, this bill also creates a state-mandated local program. State health officials will be required to work more closely with local health officials to issue health warnings to local merchants and to remove from store shelves any new candies found to be contaminated.

"We need to take immediate action to remove these candies from our communities," Vargas said.

As of April 2003, DHS had confirmed excessive levels of lead in the following candies:

- Bolorindo lollipops by Dulmex
- Coconut Rolls by Dulmex
- Tamarindo Rolls by Dulmex
- Tablarindo
- Chaca Chaca

Bolirindo lollipops, Coconut Rolls, and Tamarindo Rolls, all manufactured by Dulmex, are now officially under embargo and should not be sold in California. However, some stores may still carry these. Any of these candies found for sale in local stores should be reported to the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health, Food and Housing Division at (619) 338-2274 and to EHC.

Take Action!

Urge your Assemblymember to vote YES on AB 256. Simply fill in the name and office number of your Assemblymember, his or her office number, and clip and send the card below. Or, email the Assemblymember to urge their support.

Christine Kehoe, 76th Assembly District, Room 3152
 Jay La Suer, 77th Assembly District, Room 2016
 Shirley Horton, 78th Assembly District, Room 5126
 Juan Vargas, 79th Assembly District, Room 2013

Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov
 Assemblymember.Lasuer@assembly.ca.gov
 Assemblymember.Horton@assembly.ca.gov
 Assemblymember.Vargas@assembly.ca.gov

Capitol Office
 State Capitol, Room _____
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember _____,

I support Assembly Bill AB 256, which prohibits the sale of candies contaminated with lead in the State of California.

- All candies should be completely free of lead. There is no safe level of lead for children.
- California should ban the import and sale of all lead-contaminated candy.
- All candies and candy wrappers should be tested pro-actively before being allowed on store shelves.
- The California Department of Health Services should issue health advisories when lead has been found in candies in order to warn parents, County Health Departments, school districts and candy sellers.

I urge you to protect the health of our children and our communities by voting Yes on AB 256

Sincerely,

Name _____

Date _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

What's Goin' On?

Visit the EHC Web site

www.environmentalhealth.org

For updates on EHC activities and new Action Alerts

Or get your News and Alerts monthly via email

To join the list, email Jason Baker

JasonB@environmentalhealth.org

EHC partners with Advisory Committee to reduce pollution from boat-hull paint

San Diego soon could become a leader in the prevention of toxic contamination from copper-based boat paint, thanks to the recommendations of an advisory committee that includes Environmental Health Coalition.

In February, the San Diego Advisory Committee for Environmentally Superior Antifouling Paints sent a letter of recommendations to the California State Legislature on transitioning to the use of non-metal boat paints on recreational boats in San Diego Bay. The recommendations include a gradual phase-out of toxic copper-based boat-bottom paints on vessels 25 meters in length or less within the next seven to 12 years.

The Advisory Committee includes EHC, San Diego Unified Port District, San Diego Port Tenants Association, the California Professional Divers Association, and other appointed members representing diverse interests in San Diego Bay.

Studies have indicated that vessels with copper-based hull paints are the largest source of copper pollution in San Diego Bay, with more than half of the total copper coming from recreational boats.

The paint acts as a pesticide and kills growth – such as algae, barnacles, mussels, and worms – that can slow boats and decrease fuel consumption for powerboats. The copper from these paints builds up in the water and sediments in the Bay. When exposed to copper at elevated concentrations, various species of marine life show reduced or abnormal embryo growth, development, swimming and survival.

“We applaud the members of the Advisory Committee for their commitment to improving water quality,” said Laura Hunter, Director of EHC’s Clean Bay Campaign. “The committee is an excellent model for how groups with different interests can work together for the common good of San Diego Bay.”

Thank You, Lissa



The EHC Staff and Board of Directors would like to thank our former Fiscal Manager Lissa Adams for her selfless devotion to environmental and social justice during her seven years with EHC. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

City told to remedy toxic discharge

The City of San Diego in March received a deadline to come up with a better solution to the continued pumping of millions of gallons of contaminated water from beneath the downtown Convention Center into San Diego Bay.

The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board voted unanimously to issue a Cease and Desist order to the City and ordered the implementation of a solution by the end of the year. The Board also approved a more stringent discharge permit for the City, which requires an additional monitoring for metals, oils, the gasoline additive MTBE and other toxics.

In 1990, Environmental Health Coalition’s efforts resulted in a Regional Board prohibition on any new permanent dewatering discharges into San Diego Bay. However, a few existing buildings like the Convention Center were allowed to keep pumping provided they met the requirements of the discharge permit. The City has had violations of the permit regularly since it took over the Convention Center from the Port District.

The design of the original Convention Center included construction of a basement-level parking garage that extends into the water table. An average of 400,000 gallons of contaminated water a day is continuously pumped from beneath the Convention Center into the bay to prevent flooding.

“The Regional Board sent a clear message that the continued pollution of the Bay by the City is unacceptable,” said Laura Hunter, Director of EHC’s Clean Bay Campaign. “The Convention Center needs to be brought into compliance once and for all. The City needs to improve its treatment of the discharge or seal the leaky basement. Polluting the Bay is not an option.”

Precautionary Principle should be the basis for new CalEPA EJ guidelines

When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, reasonable precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

This concept is known as the Precautionary Principle, and for more than 20 years, Environmental Health Coalition has been advocating that local, state, national, and international governmental agencies adopt the Precautionary Principle as their method for regulating industries that pose a threat to human health and the environment.

In July, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Environmental Justice Advisory Committee will approve a new paradigm for environmental health protection. This committee was established in 2000 by SB 89 authored by Senator Martha Escutia and is charged with developing Environmental Justice recommendations for all CalEPA agencies.

These agencies include the California Air Resources Board, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Integrated Waste Management Board, and the State Water Resources Control Board.

EHC Executive Director Diane Takvorian, was appointed to the committee and elected as co-chair in 2002. EHC has been working alongside other stakeholders representing environmental justice and community organizations, businesses, and local regulators to develop these recommendations, which will be used to develop environmental justice policies that will apply to all agencies governed by CalEPA.

EHC urges the EJ Advisory Committee and CalEPA officials to ensure that the concepts of the Precautionary Principle are integrated into each of the agency's regulations and practices. More than 40 organizations and hundreds of individuals have provided testimony to CalEPA officials in favor of the concept of precaution, and have demanded that the devastating injustices in their communities be addressed.

The State of California should use the Precautionary Principle as the basis for environmental and public health laws, regulations and decision-making processes. A precautionary approach should be utilized to address existing environmental injustices and to prevent the creation of new ones by amending existing laws and incorporating the concept into new ones.

Key tenets of the principle provide that the proponent of the hazardous activity, not the public, should bear the burden of proof, that the process of applying the principle

be open, informed and democratic, and that it include all affected parties.

Any application of the principle also must include an explanation of all alternatives for addressing the problem, including the option of taking no action.

The Environmental Justice Advisory Committee should adopt the following specific EHC recommendations to correct existing environmental injustices and prevent new ones:

- Identify and reduce pollutants and pollution sources that present the greatest risk to children, including the identification of industrial, municipal, transportation and other processes that emit or release pollution that results in the most potentially harmful impacts to children's health;
- Establish an Office of Pollution Prevention;
- Assess the impact of toxic pollution on all communities and determine those that are the most severely impacted;
- Require environmental justice and alternatives assessment as part of all new permitting;
- Issue land use and zoning guidance to all municipalities; and
- Require use of the least toxic materials and processes for all new industrial processes.

Finally, CalEPA should establish health and environment goals, such as:

- Identification of contaminants in breast milk, and children's blood, identification of the key sources of these contaminants, and goals for elimination of the contaminant sources;
- Elimination of lead poisoning in children; and
- Reduction of the incidences of asthma in the State of California.

Environmental Justice cannot be achieved without a significant shift in our approach to solving problems and preventing new ones. With appropriate consideration of economic interests, preserving and restoring the health of California communities and residents must be the foremost concern of all state regulatory agencies. Foremost among these must be the health of our children

For more information on the CalEPA Environmental Justice program and the development of the Environmental Justice Guidelines, log on to the CalEPA Web site, www.Calepa.ca.gov/EnvJustice/

Welcome Aboard!

Environmental Health Coalition is pleased to welcome five new members to our Board of Directors

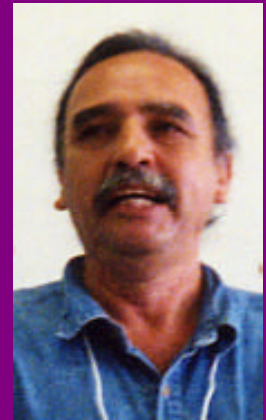


Clarice Gaylord, Ph.D.

U.S. EPA, Retired

I've been in the environmental justice field for about 10 years, and I've been consistently impressed with Environmental Health Coalition's work on both sides of the border. My goal is to continue EHC's commitment to empowering community members with information they can use to improve their neighborhoods, their health and their overall quality of life.

A pesar de que he trabajado en el campo de justicia ambiental por más o menos diez años, constantemente me impresiono con el trabajo de la Coalición de Salud Ambiental en ambos lados de la frontera. Mi meta es de continuar con el compromiso de EHC de empoderar a los miembros de la comunidad con información que puedan utilizar para mejorar sus barrios, su salud, y su calidad total de vida.



Jaime Cota Aguilar

CITTAC

I respect, admire, and believe in the value of the work done by those who invited me to join the board of Environmental Health Coalition. I believe that my participation on the board is a way to develop closer ties between organizations on both sides of the border.

Respeto, admiro y creo en el valor del trabajo echo por quienes me invitaros a ser parte de la mesa directiva de la Coalición de Salud Ambiental. Creo que mi participación en la mesa es una manera para desarrollar lazos entre organizaciones en ambos lados de la frontera. A pesar de nuestras diferencias, somos una sola comunidad económica, social y cultural y para poder trabajar juntos debemos de comprender nuestras diferencias de la manera más comprensible.



Patty Bailey

MAAC Project

I admire and respect the people whom I have worked with at EHC. Their commitment to safe, healthy living conditions and the environment is to be commended. I look forward to working alongside EHC in their efforts to educate and empower the people living in our communities.

Admiro y respeto quienes han trabajado con EHC. Su compromiso al ambiente y a condiciones de vida sanas y salvas debe ser elogiado. Tengo ganas de trabajar junto a EHC en sus esfuerzos para educar y empoderar a la gente que vive en nuestras comunidades

¡Bienvenidos!

La Coalición de Salud Ambiental le da la bienvenida a cinco nuevos integrantes de la mesa directiva.

Marta Flores

Logan Heights Family Health Center

I've long admired the community mobilization and advocacy work that EHC is involved in. I appreciate how key environmental health issues are explained in ways that community residents understand. EHC motivates residents to get involved, and has demonstrated that together, changes can be made today that will effect future generations.

Siempre he tenido admiración por la movilización comunitaria y el trabajo de abogacía en la que participa EHC. Agradezco la manera en la que los problemas de salud ambiental se definen para que los residentes de la comunidad comprendan, en como EHC motiva a los residentes para que participen, y en como ha demostrado que juntos, los cambios se logran hoy para generaciones futuras.



Molly Rhodes

HERE Local Union #30

I am honored to join EHC's Board because it is such a strong, active community-based organizing group. In my work in the San Diego labor movement, I have seen that labor and members of the environmental justice movement have a mutual and natural affinity for each other's issues. I look forward to continuing the good work that's being done for communities on both sides of the border.

Es un honor para mí de integrarme a la mesa directiva de EHC porque es un grupo fuerte y activo de organización de base comunitaria. En mi trabajo del movimiento laboral de San Diego, he visto que los miembros del movimiento de justicia ambiental y los de labor tienen afinidad mutuas y naturales para los asuntos de cada uno. Las luchas en curso e históricas de EHC en contra del racismo ambiental ocurren en las vecindades donde viven muchos de los miembros del sindicato HERE

