

Toxinformer

Environmental Health Coalition

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Eliminating Lead Hazards in San Diego



Toxinformer

Environmental Health Coalition
1717 Kettner Blvd., Suite 100
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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION
1717 KETTNER BLVD., SUITE 100
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

(619) 235-0281

FAX (619) 232-3670

e-mail: ehc@environmentalhealth.org

www.environmentalhealth.org

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, the reduction of toxic air contaminants released by industry, and the abatement of lead hazards in the home.



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.

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EHC partners with SDHC, MAAC Project for lead hazard control in at-risk communities

Bertha Villa knows more about the dangers of window sills than most people in Sherman Heights. It's not the windows, she says, but the flaking layers of paint that cover them that cause her concern.

"My neighbors and I never knew about lead poisoning," says Villa, a mother of three. "I always felt my children were safe here at home. You never think something as simple as paint on a window could be something that could harm your children for the rest of their lives."

Villa and her children are among the many families at risk for lead poisoning in high-risk San Diego communities. Childhood lead poisoning is the number one environmental health threat to children younger than 6. It can result in reduced IQ, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, hyperactivity and increased aggression.

An extensive study conducted by Environmental Health Coalition documented the need for lead hazard control in many communities. Based on the sampling results, EHC estimates that more than 68,000 homes in the County of San Diego have lead hazards and qualify as low-income households using the HUD definition.

Now, a coalition of partners is taking the needed first steps towards ending this problem.

In October, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the San Diego Housing Commission a \$1.9 million grant to reduce hazards in homes where children younger than 6 years-old reside. The Housing Commission applied for the funds under HUD's Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control grant program with EHC and the Metropolitan Area Advisory Committee (MAAC Project) as core partners. The City of San Diego, through the offices of Mayor Dick Murphy and District 8 Councilmember Ralph Inzunza, allocated \$100,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds as part of the local matching funds.

"This is about keeping children safe," said Housing Commission CEO Elizabeth Morris. "We are proud to partner with EHC and the MAAC Project in this important effort."

The funds will be used in the City of San Diego neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, Grant Hill, Logan Heights, Memorial,

Shelltown, Sherman Heights, Southcrest and Stockton. Project partners selected these neighborhoods because of the large number of housing units built before 1978, high poverty rates,

a large number of children under age six, and poorly maintained rental units – a combination of factors that places the communities at high risk for childhood lead poisoning.

Deteriorating household paint is the primary source of lead exposure in children. Paint manufactured before 1950 contained up to 50 percent lead, and household paint continued to contain substantial levels of lead until 1978. California's housing stock is the third oldest in the nation and low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color tend to have poorly maintained rental units.

Villa credits EHC's Campaign to Eliminate

Childhood Lead Poisoning with teaching her about the hidden hazards around her home. "We learned so much from (CeCLP Organizer) Luz Palomino about the dangers of lead and this program to protect children's health. It's also great to see the City taking action. I hope the government will continue to bring programs like this to our communities."

Making Progress

EHC has been a leader in lead poisoning prevention in San Diego County since the early 1990s, providing community education about lead hazards throughout our target communities. In the fall of 2000, EHC trained 18 Promotoras, members of the community, to inspect homes in Sherman Heights and National City for evidence of lead contamination, creating the inspection teams that now work in target communities to identify lead hazards

EHC community teams inspected 40 homes and apartments built before 1950 and assessed the condition of interior and exterior paint, sampled soil around the homes, and took dust samples on window sills and floors. Seventy-seven percent of the homes were found to have at least one lead hazard exceeding federal standards. Young children were found to be living in 83 percent of the homes that need lead hazard control.



CeCLP Organizer Luz Palomino, left, and Promotora Maria Radilla prepare lead hazard information for distribution during one of the campaign's community events.

New book details deceptive practices of the chemical and lead industries

The Lead Industry Association (LIA) for decades knew that its product posed serious health risks to children. But according to author Dr. Gerald Markowitz, industry executives never let the facts stand in the way of a good marketing plan, even when that



Gerald Markowitz

plan centered on convincing the public to use its deadly product to paint everything from walls to furniture to children's toys.

Environmental Health Coalition members and guests braved the stormy San Diego weather on Nov. 8, 2002 for a lecture by Markowitz and a discussion of his new book, *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*. Co-authored by David Rosner,

the book details the successful attempts by the chemical and lead industries to deceive Americans about the dangers that their deadly products present to workers, the public, and consumers. Through industry documents obtained by exhaustive research, the authors uncover a cruel and cynical disregard for human health by executives who knew full-well the plague they were unleashing on unsuspecting painters, children and families.

Lead industry officials maintain that they committed no acts of ill will against the public, Markowitz said, despite their burying of documented cases of lead poisoning – many resulting in death – that date back to the early 1900s. It was not until the 1978 Consumer Product Safety Commission ban on lead paint in 1978 that the industry was forced to change its practices.

Journalist Bill Moyers says, "*Deceit and Denial* lays bare the truth about how every one of us in America is imperiled when powerful corporations forsake their responsibility to the public health."

Copies of *Deceit and Denial* are available from EHC for \$34.95. Call (619) 235-0281 or visit our Web site, www.environmentalhealth.org. Markowitz and Rosner are donating a portion of all sales proceeds to benefit EHC.

For more information about pending lawsuits against the lead paint industry visit the Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning Web site, www.aeclp.org



EHC Promotora Imelda Perez, left, conducts sampling to test for lead in soil surrounding one of EHC's project homes. EHC's Promotoras are certified lead sampling technicians and are also trained in the identification of other household hazards like mold, pests, and carbon monoxide.

LEAD, continued from Page 3

Raul Reyes, a resident and property owner in Sherman Heights, agreed to the inspections conducted by EHC's Promotoras and was surprised at the hidden dangers found lurking on the windows and doors of the aging home. Like countless other San Diego residents, Reyes was unaware of the harmful link between paint in pre-1950s homes and childhood lead poisoning.

In September, 2002, with funds from the City of San Diego, workers from the MAAC Project trained in lead hazard control practices began work on five Sherman Heights homes identified by EHC's community inspection teams as needing lead hazard control. Villa's residence on the 200 block of 21st Street in Sherman Heights was among the first to receive attention.

"These are dangers we never knew of," Reyes said. "Knowing about the problem is one thing, but many of us have limited resources for the work it takes to control this. I'm thankful that City leaders are working to find the funding to make our community a safe place for children to live."

Councilmember Inzunza, who allocated substantial start-up funds for the project, praised the work of EHC and its partners and pledged to continue the fight to eradicate childhood lead poisoning in San Diego.

"Thanks to the work of EHC and other partners in this project, including San Diego Housing Commission, MAAC Project, Campesinos Unidos, Inc. and the community Promotoras, we now recognize the extent of the problem facing many of the low-income and children of color in San Diego," Inzunza said. "I will continue to work with community members and City officials to put an end to this prevalent but entirely preventable problem."



The San Diego City Council recognized members of the City's Lead Poisoning Prevention Citizens Advisory Task Force during National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in October 2002. Pictured from left to right: Brad Barnum, Director of Government Relations, Association of General Contractors; Alan Johanns, Asbestos and Lead Program Manager, City of San Diego Department of Environmental Services; Luz Palomino, CeCLP Organizer; Chris Gonaver, Director, City of San Diego Department of Environmental Services; Robin Layton, Executive Director, Education Enrichment Systems, Inc.; Donna Frye, Councilmember, City of San Diego District 6; Leticia Ayala, CeCLP Director; San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy; and Ralph Inzunza, Councilmember, City of San Diego District 8. Inzunza and Frye are co-chairs of the Task Force.

The work of the EHC, SDHC, and MAAC Project partnership that was formed to complete this pilot project led to the successful proposal to HUD, and funds are now available to complete lead hazard control work on over 100 additional homes. The HUD grant funds also will allow EHC to increase the number of children being tested for elevated blood-lead levels in the target communities.

New Year, New Campaign

The recent increased efforts in EHC's work to prevent childhood lead poisoning prompted the creation of the Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning. The new campaign demonstrates EHC's commitment to working with community residents, housing advocates, health officials, and government agencies to eliminate the sources of lead exposure in San Diego County. The Campaign staff includes Director Leticia Ayala, and Community Organizer Luz Palomino.

"Seeing the positive changes we've helped bring about through our lead work is a sign that change is possible. It motivates us to continue to advocate on behalf of the children in San Diego," Ayala said. "The work ahead of us this year is challenging, but we've come a long way. The families are counting on us and we're not going to let them down."

The new year finds EHC's inspection teams hard at work in the CeCLP target neighborhoods, with a goal of recruiting families to participate in EHC's Healthy Homes project. Thanks to funding from the Community Environmental Health

Resource Center, EHCs Promotoras now are certified lead sampling technicians and are also trained in the identification of other household hazards like mold, pests, and carbon monoxide. The teams will be able to inspect 200 homes in San Diego and National City, some of which will be referred for lead hazard control.

Also this year, the CeCLP team will continue its work with the Cities of San Diego and National City to help them improve and expand programs to identify lead hazards in housing and hold the owners responsible.

National City has trained its code enforcement personnel to identify potential lead hazards as part of a proactive campaign to evaluate the condition of all housing in the City. Code enforcement staff now cite lead-based paint, order repairs using lead-safe work practices and conduct

follow-up visits to ensure that repairs have been done in a timely manner. They also are providing free paint to community residents. EHC will continue to inspect homes in National City and work with City officials for the creation of a comprehensive lead ordinance.

In April 2002, the San Diego City Council approved the Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program and changed city law to allow the city attorney to prosecute landlords who fail to remove lead-based paint hazards from their properties after a child living there has been found to have elevated blood-lead levels. At the same time, the City created a Lead Poisoning Prevention Citizens Advisory Task Force. This year, EHC is working with City officials to create a comprehensive lead poisoning prevention program that includes code enforcement.

"One of the most challenging things about our work was simply getting public officials, housing and health agencies to acknowledge the threat lead poses to children's health," Ayala said. "Now we have to work to ensure that those most at risk are protected and that adequate resources are brought to families in need."

Take Action!

EHC is looking for residents in Barrio Logan, Grant Hill, Logan Heights, Memorial, Shelltown, Sherman Heights, Southcrest and Stockton who would like to volunteer their home for a Healthy Homes inspection. For more information, contact Leticia Ayala or Luz Palomino at (619) 235-0281 or email LeticiaA@environmentalhealth.org.

SALTA strengthens community organizing in Colonia Chilpancingo

Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental and EHC's Border Environmental Justice Campaign (BEJC) marked another important milestone in December 2002 as more than a dozen members of the EHC affiliate office in Tijuana completed the first SALTA Chilpancingo, a training designed to further strengthen the community's work for social and environmental justice in the San Diego/Tijuana border region.

SALTA (Salud Ambiental, Latinas Tomando Acción or Environmental Health, Latinas Taking Action) is EHC's unique leadership development and environmental health and justice training. EHC has used this model for training community promotoras for seven years and has adapted it for various groups in the U.S. and Mexico. The SALTA model has been presented at many national and international meetings and conferences.

BEJC Director Amelia Simpson called SALTA Chilpancingo an important step in EHC's support of the Colectivo. The training follows on the formal inauguration of the Colectivo in June 2002.

"The SALTA training is aimed at advancing the Colectivo's goal to build a safe and healthy community by lending EHC's expertise to local activists," Simpson said. "The training empowers the Colectivo through knowledge and experience, while at the same time helping EHC support the Colectivo through data collection integrated into the training."

Lourdes Luján, a promotora and participant in the SALTA Chilpancingo, stressed the importance of the training for building knowledge of health and environmental impacts in Colonia Chilpancingo. "SALTA Chilpancingo also has helped us build solidarity as a group," Luján said. "Our last SALTA session ended in the decision to call a meeting of the Colectivo members, and to elect a rotating governing committee for organizing and guiding our social justice projects."

A Constant Struggle

Colonia Chilpancingo, home to almost 10,000 residents, is plagued by a number of problems perpetuated by the North American Free Trade Agreement and the maquiladora industry. The Colectivo continues to fight for justice through numerous activities, including the cleanup of *Metales y Derivados*, an abandoned lead smelter contaminated with more than 7,000



Yesenia Palomares, left, and Lourdes Luján, promotoras with Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental, participate in a globalization exercise with BEJC Organizer Magdalena Cerda. During the exercise, participants looked at labels on their clothing that indicated where the garment was made, then marked that location on a map of the world to show the widespread impact of globalization in the garment industry.

metric tons of toxic waste that stands just 150 yards from the Colonia.

Many of the problems encountered in the Colonia stem from a lack of infrastructure. Numerous streets are unpaved, and many families are not hooked up to water and sewage systems. These problems exacerbate the already formidable health risks posed by toxics from *Metales* and other nearby maquiladoras. SALTA participants discussed these issues, and learned about dangers from common items in the neighborhood like cooking pots and candies that may contain lead.

'For me, SALTA was like waking up and seeing how much the world needs all of us to help each other in combatting injustice and saving the environment.'

~ Luz María Chávez Pérez,
SALTA Graduate

BEJC Organizer Magdalena Cerda said the unique challenges faced by Colonia residents necessitated the creation of a training that deals with the specifics of life in the Colonia.

“The impunity enjoyed by the maquiladora industry and other businesses in and near this Colonia creates conditions of social injustice that must be addressed on many levels. SALTA has strengthened the community’s capacity to operate on different fronts, from advocating for the renegotiation of unfair trade agreements perpetuated by NAFTA, to pressuring the Mexican government to defend the community’s right to a clean and safe environment, to informing the community of simple, practical ways they can protect health in the home and in the neighborhood,” Cerda said. “So, in addition to the healthy household and lead exposure information included in past SALTAs, we included a new set of interactive presentations on the maquiladora industry, trade agreements, corporate globalization, and human rights. The political economy of environmental degradation is highlighted to address the needs of a community whose destiny is very closely connected to trade negotiations and industry decisions.”

Problems and Solutions

The SALTA Chilpancingo sessions began in October 2002 with sessions that connected local needs to global perspectives. Experienced EHC staff members participated in the training. María Moya, lead organizer for EHC’s Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign, discussed toxics in the home. Leticia Ayala and Luz Palomino of the Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Lead Poisoning, presented on the health risks of lead and how to reduce them. Melanie McCutchan and Joy Williams from the Research and Community Assistance Program lent their expertise on toxics and economic theory.

The training sessions were rich in exchanges of information as participants shared stories from the community. Concerns that surfaced included myriad types of pollution and environmental health problems. One participant told of contamination problems from open-air pens with hundreds of milk cows across an unpaved road a few feet from homes. Another shared the case of a truck that collected rubber tires from people in the Colonia and dumped them a few feet behind houses in the community, where many of the tires were burned. Still another told of a fire extinguisher painting business that operates right next to a residence, spewing paint residue and fumes into the home. The families nearby reported to a SALTA interviewer that their laundry turns with red with paint when it’s hung out to dry.

“The information that SALTA participants gathered as part of the training is invaluable for the Colectivo to assess the needs and priorities of the community,” Cerda said.



‘SALTA was something new for me, a good experience in which I learned how we have to join together and work for the same goal, which is health and a clean environment.’

~ Andrea Pedro Aguilar



‘In SALTA, I learned how important it is to live in a clean environment, free of health risks. I feel better prepared now to continue supporting the environmental justice project. I thank everybody for everything I learned.’

~ Verónica Cruz García

Chula Vistans support alternatives to high-rise development on Bayfront site

Some want walking trails while others want open space, but skyscrapers are out of the question.

Chula Vista residents, community members, and environmental and labor leaders sent this message loud and clear during two recent public workshops to discuss proposed development on the last undeveloped site on San Diego Bay. Supporters of Environmental Health Coalition's "Don't Pave Paradise" campaign were on hand December 7 and January 11 to share their vision of the future of the Mid-Bayfront site with the Chula Vista City Council. Speaker after speaker told the Chula Vista City Council that any project built on the 125-acre site should protect the wildlife habitat, provide ample public spaces, protect air and water quality, provide quality jobs and reflect the site's natural beauty.

In April, the City Council granted Pacifica Development exclusive rights for two years to purchase the Mid Bayfront site and develop plans. The land is adjacent to the most sensitive wildlife resources on the Bay, including the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. Pacifica proposed Bayfront Village, a massive residential development that would include 3,400 residential units and six skyscrapers up to 24 stories. The project would bring an additional 25,000 daily car trips on already congested roads, an additional 6,000 residents, and would take more than 10 years to complete.

Facing strong community opposition, Pacifica in October agreed to suspend the project and work with EHC and other community members to negotiate a new vision for the bayfront.

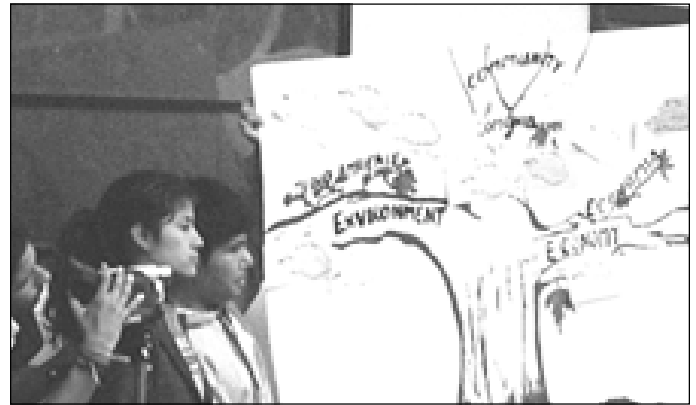
"Development on this property is not just any run-of-the-mill decision," said Laura Hunter, Director of EHC's Clean Bay Campaign. "This project will represent the vision of the residents of Chula Vista for years to come. We urge the City Council to work to make the Chula Vista Bayfront a legacy we can be proud of."

Upon learning of the proposed development, EHC formed a strong coalition with environmental, labor, community residents and organizers to oppose Bayfront Village. Since May, an EHC Community Action Team has been working on community-based alternatives to the project. Organizers, including a large contingent of youth activists, canvassed the Chula Vista community and sought residents' opinions about the site and what alternative development they would envision for the bayfront.

"Our youth volunteers have played a tremendous role in getting the word out to Chula Vista residents and giving them an opportunity to share their visions for the bayfront," said CBC Organizer Nohelia Ramos.

Survey supports alternatives

During the January 11 workshop, Chula Vista residents and EHC presented survey results to the City Council that show Chula Vista residents overwhelmingly support alternatives to proposed high-rise development on the Chula Vista Mid-Bayfront.



Alonzo Maciel, left, a student at Chula Vista High School, BEJC Organizer Nohelia Ramos, and Francis Go, a member of the PURE environmental club at Sweetwater High School, presented the Chula Vista City Council with an "Idea Tree" filled with community ideas for alternatives to proposed development on the Mid-Bayfront site in Chula Vista.

Yes to open space

Ninety-three percent of the 250 Chula Vista residents surveyed supported restoring the Mid-Bayfront site's natural habitat. Ninety-two percent indicated that nature trails were a high priority or acceptable community-space use for the site, and 81 percent indicated that exercise areas were a high priority or acceptable community-space use.

Additionally, 83 percent of survey respondents indicated that they would support a public bond measure or other public subsidies to provide partial funding for increased public space.

No to high rises

Eighty-three percent of Chula Vistans surveyed find high-rise residential development on the Mid-Bayfront unacceptable. Seventy-nine percent indicate that mid-rise residential development is unacceptable. Residents instead indicated that an Ecotourism Center (48 percent), restaurants (42 percent) or a Conference/Retreat Center (38 percent) are acceptable uses of development space. Community members preferred uses focusing on the local public as opposed to visitor serving uses.

Take Action!

More community meetings on the Mid-Bayfront development plan are in the works. To stay on top of the latest developments, join EHC's Activist List of Chula Vista Bayfront development. For more information, contact Nohelia Ramos at (619) 235-0281 or email NoheliaR@environmentalhealth.org.

Share your thoughts on Bayfront development with members of the Chula Vista City Council. They need to hear from everyone who cares about this issue. Call (619) 691-5044 to express your views.

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or Email: letters@uniontrib.com

EHC monitoring cleanup of Master Plating site

After celebrating the closure of Master Plating on November 3, 2002, Environmental Health Coalition and Barrio Logan residents turned their attention to the cleanup of the facility.

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) measured extremely high levels of chromium 6 last January when Master Plating was doing initial clean up inside the facility. This raised a red flag for residents about the cleanup process required by the County's settlement agreement with Master Plating. Following a meeting in November with the County of San Diego, during which residents voiced concerns about their potential exposure to toxics during clean up, EHC advocated for the relocation of residents during the cleanup process. This resulted in the temporary relocation of 19 individuals at the expense of the City of San Diego.

The October 2002 shutdown of Master Plating – a metal-plating shop that had been operating within several 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 ARB and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District detected high levels of chromium 6 near the plating company. Chromium 6 is a toxic air pollutant that can increase the risk of cancer even at very low levels.

Workers contracted by Master Plating removed equipment, cleaned and decontaminated the facility, and removed all hazardous waste and materials. During this phase, which ended on December 20, workers and county officials discovered evidence of soil contamination on the site.



Many of the signs used by EHC and the Barrio Logan community during demonstrations against Master Plating hung outside the Martinez residence on Newton Avenue during a celebration of the Master Plating shutdown.

“EPA officials began taking samples of the soil at neighboring properties and inside the building in early January. The sampling revealed levels of chromium, copper, lead and nickel at levels well above hazardous waste limits,” said Paula Forbis, director of EHC’s Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign.

“The EPA’s emergency response team will be handling the next phase of the cleanup, which will begin in the next few weeks. EHC will continue to watchdog the clean-up process to ensure that the cleanup is conducted in a health-protective manner,” she said.

EJ Demo partners target reduction of diesel emissions exposure

The Barrio Logan Environmental Justice Demonstration Project, which was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with Environmental Health Coalition, is a roundtable of local, state and federal agencies, as well as large and small business, community organizations and residents. Its mission is to promote environmental justice in Barrio Logan by reducing toxic air contaminants, eliminating unhealthy land use practices, and promoting children’s health in the communities of Barrio Logan and Logan Heights.

The EJ Demonstration Project Partners have been meeting for two years and working on various projects. The Partners now have decided to focus their work for the coming year on

reducing residents’ exposure to diesel emissions.

Activities of the project will include inventorying major sources of diesel in the neighborhood, identifying resources which can be used to reduce emissions, implementing a pilot diesel reduction project, resolving problems with truck staging and idling in the community, and serving as a resource to community planning efforts regarding truck routing.

The California Air Resources Board estimates that diesel particulate matter represents 70 percent of the cancer risk from air toxics in urban areas. Sources of diesel in the Barrio Logan/ Logan Heights area include diesel trucks, buses, ships, trains, as well as smaller diesel engines like forklifts and generators, which are prevalent throughout industries in the community.

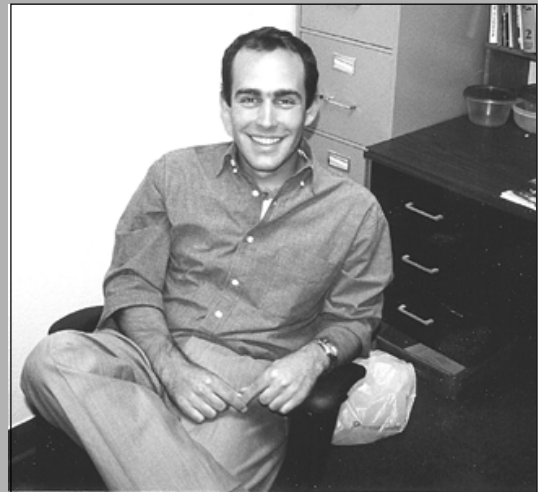


EHC Welcomes New Staff



Albert Huang, CBC Policy Advocate

"I look forward to uniting workers, bayside communities and conservationists to clean up, restore and protect San Diego Bay."



Hays Witt, TFN Neighborhood Revitalization Project

"I'm looking forward to working with our members to make sure that development decisions make our neighborhoods better places to live."

Thank You, Stephanie



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

What's Goin' On?

Visit the EHC Web site
www.environmentalhealth.org
 For updates on EHC activities and
 our latest Action Alerts

Or get your News and Alerts
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JasonB@environmentalhealth.org

NAFTA leads to assaults on Mexican Labor Laws

Submitted By

CITTAC (Information Center for Women and Men Workers)

CITTAC is a non-governmental organization in Tijuana made up of women and men workers in the maquiladora industry. CITTAC is dedicated to defending the rights of maquiladora workers in Baja California, Mexico. One of CITTAC's programs from the beginning has been to inform workers of their rights by distributing bulletins inside and outside the workplace. CITTAC has also advised workers who then represent themselves in complaints against companies. By this means, the first case in Tijuana involving sexual harrasment of a maquiladora worker was won. EHC and its Tijuana affiliate, the Colectivo Chilpancingo Pro Justicia Ambiental, collaborate regularly with CITTAC, one of whose members, Jaime Cota, is on the EHC Board of Directors.

The Mexican Constitution has a long history. For many years, Mexican men and women understood that the three most important articles in the Constitution are Articles 3, 27 and 123. These articles stem from the Mexican Revolution in 1910 and were achieved thanks to the great sacrifice of one million Mexicans who died during the revolution. Articles 3, 27 and 123 protect the land, education and Mexican labor, respectively. We know these articles are not perfect and that they often are partially enforced or not enforced at all. Nevertheless, Articles 3, 27 and 123 express an ideal of justice and represent hope in the struggle for better living and working conditions for the working class.

Since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, these three articles have been assaulted by the Mexican government. The first strike was on Article 27 and farmers lost their right to get land to work. This was a major cause of the Zapatista rebellion. Later Article 3 was changed, forcing students to give up their right to free higher education. Student riots erupted at the Mexican National University. And now it is Article 123's turn, the Article that regulates employer-worker relations in Mexico.

Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution establishes the rights and obligations recognized for men and women workers. Mexican Labor law dictates that the maximum work shift is an eight hour day; that the minimum wage be enough to satisfy normal needs of the head of the family and dependants; that the principle of equal work for equal pay be respected, without regard to sex or race. Article 123 and its complementary laws also establish the obligation of employers for the costs involved in labor accidents, as well as the right to unionize and strike. The law explicitly prohibits labor regulations that go against Article 123, although many maquiladora industries violate this principle daily.

After the signing of NAFTA, business groups demanded changes in Article 123 and today, with the support of President Vicente Fox's administration, have drafted an initiative for changes that is being discussed in Congress.

One of the main items targeted for reform is the work shift. The bosses want to remove the law that enforces the



On October 7, 2002, EHC participated in a press conference in San Diego to protest NAFTA's silencing Mexican workers involved in a labor dispute.

Pictured from left to right: Martha Ojeda, Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CMJ), based in San Antonio, Texas; Connie García, Policy Advocate, BEJC; Jamie Cota, Information Center for Men and Women Workers, based in Tijuana; and Francisca Jiménez, TFN Organizer.

eight hour workday and replace it with a "flexible" 48 hour week shift, "in the style of the United States". The workers lose with this change. They can be required to work 10, 12 or more hours a day without any extra pay. Their work shifts can be changed. The woman worker no longer can organize her life: it is more difficult to find someone to take care of her children while at work and she no longer can even dream about training or going to school.

Article 123 requires salaries to be sufficient to support a family. This is not enforced and the new labor law does nothing to improve salaries. In fact, since NAFTA began, the true wage for workers has gone down tremendously. Today, 80 percent of the Mexican population lives in poverty and at least half survive in extreme poverty.

Union leaders from the Central Mexican Workers and from the Labor Congress have announced that they will accept the changes proposed by the government and employers, a new betrayal in the long history of these shady, government-controlled unions. These unions will have more control over the workers, as the new labor law makes striking or creating democratic unions more difficult.

The changes in the Mexican Labor Law will not go through without resistance. Maquiladora workers are organizing on the Mexico-US border to say NO! to the NAFTA Labor Law.

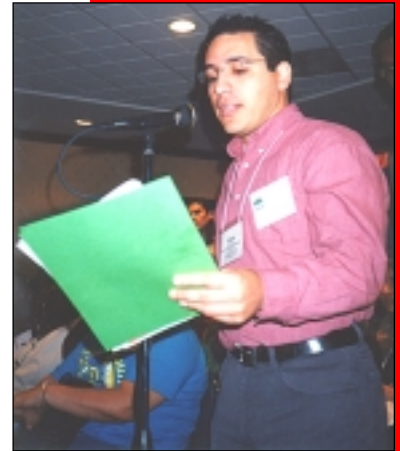
The indigenous peoples in Chiapas did not give up. The students at the University rebelled. Workers now are getting ready for the fight.

E H C I N A C T I O N



In October 2002, EHC representatives joined more than 1,200 delegates from grassroots and community-based environmental justice organizations for the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. From left to right: Leticia Ayala, Nohelia Ramos, Albert Huang, Maria Moya, César Luna, Magdalena Cerda, and EHC Executive Director Diane Takvorian. EHC Board member Michael Martínez also attended the Summit.

En octubre de 2002, representantes de EHC se integraron a más de 1, 200 delegados de organizaciones de justicia ambiental de base comunitaria para la Segunda Conferencia Nacional de Liderazgo de Gente de Color en Washington, D.C. De izquierda a derecha: Leticia Ayala, Nohelia Ramos, Albert Huang, Maria Moya, César Luna, Magdalena Cerda, y la Directora Ejecutiva de EHC, Diane Takvorian. Michael Martínez, miembro de la Mesa Directiva de EHC, también asistió.



César Luna, former director of EHC's Border Environmental Justice Campaign, speaks about environmental justice issues in the U.S./ Mexico border region during the Summit.

Cesar Luna, antiguo director de la Campaña Fronteriza para la Justicia Ambiental de EHC, habla sobre asuntos de justicia ambiental en la región fronteriza de San Diego/ Tijuana durante la conferencia.



Joy Williams, MPH, Research and Community Assistant Director for EHC, gives a presentation on Master Plating during a November 11, 2002 meeting of the American Public Health Association in Philadelphia, Pa.

Joy Williams, MPH, directora de Investigación y de Asistencia a la Comunidad, da una presentación sobre Master Plating durante una reunión de la Asociación Americana de Salud Pública en Philadelphia, Pa.

E H C E N A C C I Ó N

Hundreds of Barrio Logan residents, EHC members, friends, and government officials turned out for a community block party on November 3, 2002 to celebrate the shutdown of Master Plating.

Cientos de residentes de Barrio Logan, miembros de EHC, amistades y funcionarios gubernamentales asistieron a la fiesta del 3 de noviembre de 2002 para celebrar la clausura de Master Plating.



EHC Board member Michael Martinez thanks the crowd for their support in the fight for a cleaner, healthier community.

Michael Martinez, miembro de la Mesa Directiva de EHC, agradece a la multitud por su apoyo en la lucha de una comunidad más sana y limpia.

Paula Forbis, left, director of EHC's Toxic-Free Neighborhoods Campaign, honors San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox for the County's efforts in the Master Plating shutdown.

Paula Forbis, izquierda, directora de la Campaña Barrios Libres de Tóxicos de EHC, dio honor al Supervisor del Condado de San Diego, Greg Cox por sus esfuerzos en la clausura de Master Plating.

