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# Port of San Diego Acknowledges Environmental Justice

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Environmental Health Coalition

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At one point in June, a draft of the Port of San Diego's 50-year vision statement failed to fully address the importance of clean air and environmental justice in the area.

At least from the view of the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) and many residents in Barrio Logan, National City and other areas of this Southern California region.

And so, residents spoke up – and officials changed. What emerged on Tuesday in the port's policy document was an acknowledgment of the need for clean air and healthy communities, EHC said in a statement. Residents and EHC thanked port officials.

"The Board of Commissioners took action today to close this gap and commit to environmental justice for the next 50 years," EHC said.

"Our community is glad the Port listened to the priorities expressed by the public and has plans to address the issues faced by neighborhoods like mine," Margarita Garcia, who lives in National City, said.

"We deal with the pollution impacts of operations along the Port, yet don't have access to the benefits like access to the waterfront and clean air."

The push for clean air in communities in San Diego has been an issue for years. Barrio Logan, for example, once was a vibrant area of the city. But poverty affects the neighborhood, which has higher rates of asthma compared to other parts of San Diego.

San Diego City Councilmember David Alvarez, who represents many residents in the affected neighborhoods, said he appreciates the Board of Commissioners for dealing with this important issue.

"I'm grateful that they listened to residents in crafting a principle that will bring environmental justice to neighborhoods where it has long been absent," he said in a statement.

The new environmental language in the draft document still needs final approval by the Board of Commissioners. That is expected to take place on Aug. 12.

EHC released the revised draft language, which reads: "Promote clean air, healthy communities, and environmental justice: Seek to achieve environmental justice, which shall be defined as working to reduce the cumulative health burdens on neighboring communities and ensure fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes in developing, adopting, implementing and enforcing environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

*Environmental Health Coalition works to achieve environmental and social justice by empowering communities to make social change. The group works to protect public health and the environment from toxic pollution.*



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