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Polluting Auto Shop in Front of Kimball Elementary School to Relocate *Historic move is second step toward a healthier community for Old Town National City residents*

National City, Calif.—August 19 —Wednesday marked the last day that Steve's West Coast Automotive, a polluting auto repair business, could legally operate in front of National City's Kimball Elementary. After years of operating across the street, polluting the school environment and putting children's health at risk, National City's Council gave Steve's West Coast Automotive a formal phase-out deadline for last Wednesday, August 12, 2015. This move represents the second polluting business asked to relocate in order to protect the health of children and enforce the community's new land-use laws.

[Environmental Health Coalition \(EHC\)](#), an organization fighting toxic pollution in underserved communities, thanks the council for taking action to remove one of the city's most damaging polluters. The organization, committed to building healthy communities, now works to find solutions for preserving National City's auto businesses in designated industrial areas, away from homes and schools.

"The auto industry is invaluable to the people of Old Town National City, and so is a healthy, safe place to live. Separating the zones for industrial uses like auto repair shops away from schools and housing, is the best way to protect both community interests," says Carolina Martinez, policy advocate with EHC.

In 2012, an evaluation of local polluters ranked Steve's West Coast Automotive and Jose's Auto Electric as posing the most significant risk to community health and in violation of the revised zoning in Old Town National City. The two businesses have been cited more than 23 times for code violations during an eight-year period. On November 5, 2013, National City's Council approved the terms to phase-out the two auto businesses. Jose's Auto Electric phase-out deadline was July 25.

Historically, Old Town National City was a residential area, but to facilitate the car industry after World War II, incompatible land-use patterns were permitted and industrial businesses came into the neighborhood en masse. Old Town National City now houses an average of 194 polluters per square mile compared to an average of three in San Diego County.

This intermingling of industrial uses with homes and schools creates air quality hazards for residents, including those with asthma or other respiratory illnesses. Children are at particular risk. In the San Diego region, National City children visit emergency rooms for asthma treatment almost twice as often as the county average.

Old Town was rezoned in 2010 to residential and commercial-compatible designations to reestablish the community as a safe, healthy and vibrant neighborhood. Because of dangerous land-use patterns, National City adopted the amortization ordinance in 2006, which gave the City the right to phase out non-conforming uses that endanger residents. The City sets a reasonable phase out timeframe for each business, to allow owners to recuperate any investments and plan their move to a new location. Steve's West Coast Automotive plans to move to either Chula Vista or San Diego by the end of the month.

For more information on EHC, please visit www.environmentalhealth.org.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION: Founded in 1980, Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) builds grassroots campaigns to confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use, and unsustainable energy policies. Visit us online at <http://www.environmentalhealth.org/>.