

A CBE News Release

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Nile Malloy, Program Director (510) 302-0430 x11
Greg Karras, Senior Scientist (510) 302-0430 x19



CBE’s less pollution–more jobs land use policy accepted for further review

Richmond, 24 April 2012: Following two nights of fierce debate a land use policy intended to cut industrial air pollution and create jobs in low-income communities of color here was accepted for further study by a five–two City Council vote. The policy would require large industrial facilities to use maximum energy efficiency for new projects, install least emitting equipment, support public transit, and offset new emissions locally when major projects are planned, rather than increase emissions. It was crafted by Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and recommended for inclusion in the Richmond General Plan by the city’s Planning Commission.

“This is a hard-won step toward healthier, more prosperous communities with less pollution and more jobs in Richmond” said Nile Malloy, CBE Northern California Program Director.

At stake is community health and jobs. Today, industrial air pollutant emissions in Richmond are up to ten times the regional or statewide averages on a per capita basis, and compared with the statewide average for all business activity, oil refining creates ten times fewer jobs. (www.cbe-cal.org; *A less-pollution, more-jobs land use policy to make Richmond a Breen Zone.*) Emissions could further increase without the less pollution-more jobs policy, causing additional significant impacts, according to the EIR that analyzed the General Plan. CBE and a broad coalition of community-based allies said our environmental health must be protected, and pointed out that projects to replace aging equipment at existing facilities and projects to rebuild with greener technology create more local jobs.

Opponents argued that additional emission curbs are unnecessary and could threaten jobs. Chevron announced that the policy would “effectively terminate” its planned refinery project here. But instead of increasing emissions, the oil giant can afford to replace aging refinery equipment with modern, efficient equipment that uses a less-polluting combination of fuels and feedstock. Chevron’s newly unveiled preview of its plans suggests a threat to environmental health *and* jobs. We need and can have both, and this is not about Chevron: our communities are planning for everyone’s future in Richmond now.

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