



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Contact:**

Esther Goolsby, CBE Community Organizer, 510-686-3307, [esther@cbeocal.org](mailto:esther@cbeocal.org)

### **EAST OAKLAND RISES UP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

OAKLAND, CA - The East Oakland Congress of Neighborhoods met with concerned community members at Allen Temple Baptist Church to raise awareness and build community power to fight the toxic effects of air pollution in East Oakland.

East Oakland is primarily home to Oakland's low-income Black and Brown residents. According to the Alameda County Public Health Department, these community members suffer from double the asthma emergency room visits and hospitalizations, the highest rate of both stroke and congestive heart failure, and the lowest life expectancy in Alameda County, by as many as 10 years. Many residents are unaware that they face these elevated health risks.

Despite the known health hazards, both the City of Oakland and the county continue to allow heavy industries to operate in close proximity to homes, schools, parks, churches and communities in East Oakland. In January 2018, after years of legal battles, a new mega-crematorium owned by Service Corporation International (SCI) began operations only half a mile away from the residential neighborhood of Columbia Gardens, adding dangerous particulate air pollution from the burning of 3,000 bodies a year to a neighborhood already heavily burdened by air pollution from nearby I-880.

#### **THE POWER IN OUR BREATH: A TOWN HALL ON AIR QUALITY**

Community members learned about local polluters, such as AB&I Foundry and the SCI Crematorium, and the health impacts of air pollution. Residents also shared their personal stories of living with these health impacts. They then took some time to discuss and propose their own solutions to ensure everyone's right to breathe clean air.

"It was very important that we had this town hall, because the air and what is in it is not being taken as seriously as it should be," **said East Oakland resident Cesar Fragoso.** "We need to understand that the air we breathe is fundamental to our survival."

**Lifelong East Oakland resident and community organizer Esther Goolsby said, “I hope that my neighbors take all this information and spread the word across Oakland and Alameda County. We need to take care of our air.”**

#### **EAST OAKLAND CONGRESS OF NEIGHBORHOODS**

The East Oakland Congress of Neighborhoods is formed on the basic principle that the residents of East Oakland have a right to work, live, worship, learn and play in our neighborhoods any way that we as a community see fit. We insist on equitable treatment from public agencies and on a voice at all tables where our neighborhoods' futures are determined.

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