



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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May 7, 2013

City Council President Patricia Kernighan
Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612
Via e-mail: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

RE: Agenda Item 9.2, Extension of Emergency Ordinance for Crematoria and Public Health

Council President Kernighan:

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) employs a range of strategies to protect individual and community health, including analyzing public health impacts of land use planning decisions. I write to express our support of the ordinance requiring a Major Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to establish or expand a crematorium within the City Of Oakland.

Cremators emit a number of criteria and toxic air pollutants such as particulate matter, sulfur compounds, lead, arsenic, hexavalent chromium, mercury and chlorinated dibenzodioxins, and furans.¹ Several of these emissions are known to exacerbate chronic conditions such as asthma, and have been linked to cancer.²

Given these potential health impacts, we agree that there should be public notice and a public process to determine conditions of approval, which would be required through a Major CUP. We understand that a crematorium, Sentinel Cremation Societies is currently being proposed for East Oakland and will emit a range of pollutants.³ ACPHD has sent similar letters to the City Council on May 12, 2012 and to the Planning Commission and City staff on August 29, 2012.

This community already faces a disproportionate burden from illness associated with air pollution: the rate of asthma Emergency Department (ED) visits in East Oakland is over two times higher than the Alameda County rate and one of the highest in the county and state, and among children under five years of age, the asthma ED

¹ The criteria air pollutants from these cremators include: particulate matter, nitrogen compounds, sulfur compounds, carbon monoxide and precursor organic compounds. The toxic emissions from these cremators include: acetaldehyde, arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, copper, formaldehyde, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen fluoride, lead, mercury, nickel, selenium, chlorinated dibenzodioxins and furans, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons/ benzo (a) pyrene equivalents.

² California Air Resources Board. 2009. Air Pollution and Health Fact Sheet. <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/health/fs/fs1/fs1.htm>

³ Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Engineering Evaluation Report. Sentinel Cremation Societies, Inc. Plant #20905, Application #23669.

visit rate in East Oakland is more than two times the County rate.⁴ Given the existing disproportionate burden of disease, a public process to fully understand the potential impacts of the crematorium is important for protecting community health.

ACPHD is dedicated to improving health of all Alameda County residents. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Flournoy, MPH
Deputy Director and Director of Planning, Policy and Health Equity

cc: Councilmember Brooks;
Councilmember Gallo;
Councilmember Kalb;
Councilmember Kaplan;
Councilmember Kernighan;
Councilmember McElhaney,
Councilmember Reid and
Councilmember Schaaf
City Clerk

⁴ For Zip codes 94621 & 94603, the rate of asthma ED visits is 1,230 per 100,000 residents; the Alameda County rate is 553 per 100,000. The asthma ED visit rate for children is 2,048 per 100,000 (0-4 year-olds) compared to the Alameda County rate of 1,301 per 100,000. Asthma inpatient hospitalization rate is 339 per 100,000 residents; the county rate is 147 per 100,000. The childhood asthma hospitalization rate is 908 per 100,000; the county rate is 477 per 100,000. Source: ACPHD CAPE Unit with 2008-2010 data from California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD).