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Dear East Oakland COMMUNITY & MEMBERS

May 13, 2013

On Tuesday night, Oakland City Council unanimously passed a 180-day extension for the Emergency Ordinance that requires any new crematoriums in Oakland to first, obtain a Major Conditional Use Permit. This is what Oakland residents wanted! East Oakland residents, Allen Temple Baptist Church, Communities for a Better Environment, Alameda County Public Health Department, and local businesses believe that everyone deserves the freedom to breathe!

Without this emergency ordinance, the City would allow human cremation to be classified as a “General Manufacturing” activity, and therefore not require a permit with public participation and environmental review. Cremation is not a manufacturing activity and the community has a right to know!

We want to thank the hundreds of Oakland residents that signed our petition, Reverend Buford and Allen Temple Baptist Church, Allen Temple Arms, Alameda Public Health Department, Hope Collaborative, and CBE members for your support. Over 57 residents signed up to speak on this issue.

We had fiery public testimony of over twenty-five Oakland residents who are still outraged by a proposed “Walmart-scale” crematorium with the capacity to burn over 3000 bodies per year in East Oakland. More mercury would come out of this proposed facility in East Oakland than the Richmond Chevron refinery reports it is putting out in the air.

East Oakland is already overburdened by pollution. Because of that, we have high asthma rates and lower life expectancy than people in other parts of the Bay area. We also have worse impacts of economic depression, blight, and violence.

We need to build a healthier Oakland, and not allow more pollution in our air. We need policies that will improve the quality of life of ALL Oakland residents.

Because of your support, we won this round but our work is not complete. City staff will have 180 days to make this ordinance permanent so that any new crematorium wanting to come to Oakland knows it will need to get a Conditional Use Permit. Making the law clear is important.

Thank you for all your support! We give a special thanks to the leadership of Vice Mayor, Councilmember Reid and his Chief of Staff Iris Merriouns!

In Solidarity and Justice,

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)
Oakland Team