

## BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NEWS

### “Brownfields” Toxic Sites

Bayview Hunters Point is known all too well for their toxic land sites, including 47 Brownfields sites just in the Southeast area of San Francisco. A Brownfield site is a term used to describe property intended for expansion, redevelopment or reuse which may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.

Now, there are plans to redevelop these toxic sites and hand them over to the city for open space and other projects. One development, known as the Blue Greenway, will be on the City’s Southeast waterfront. Before development, we need to make sure the toxics are properly remediated.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requested Weston Solutions conduct a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) of Bayview. This work intends to describe conditions at Brownfields sites being considered for redevelopment in order for detailed cleanup plans to be made.

Government agencies have a poor track record of keeping residents safe and healthy during the cleanups. The EPA regulates toxic cleanups by making rules for the Navy to follow however, the Navy does not always follow the rules and the EPA does not regulate these conditions well. For example, during recent work at the shipyard, requirement to keep the soil watered to minimize emissions was often not followed. The result is that toxic dust often pollutes neighboring homes during construction work and cleanups. Residents report their asthma, along with many other health effects like skin lesions and hair loss, flare up during these site renovations because toxic dust is not controlled properly. Greenaction and residents want to make sure toxic sites are properly dealt with, like making sure the soil is watered, and do not pose a continuing health threat. Taking care of residents while the cleanup and construction work happens is the main concern. Relocating neighboring families as well as putting more pressure for proper site cleanup and minimizing emissions during work are some health-protective solutions.



*Bayview Hunters Point*

### **Brownfields Sites identified in the Targeted Brownfields Assessment include:**

- 894 Innes Ave.  
Contaminants: high levels of copper, lead and other metals
- 1301 Yosemite Ave.  
Potential Contaminants: lead, TPH-motor oil, chromium VI
- 2201 Bayshore Blvd.  
Potential Contaminants: arsenic, lead, TPH-diesel, TPH-motor oil

### **Potential Resident Health Problems Due to Contaminants:**

- Arsenic: sore throat, irritated lungs, nausea, vomiting, decreased red/white blood cell count, abnormal heart rhythm, damage to blood vessels, corns or warts, skin, liver, bladder, lung cancer
- Chromium VI: asthma, cough, wheezing, shortness of breath, skin rashes, known carcinogenic
- Lead: decreased function of nervous system, weakness in fingers, wrists and ankles, increased in blood pressure, anemia, brain damage, kidney damage, miscarriages, low sperm production, kidney tumors
- Numerous emergency hospital and doctor visits
- Missed school days for kids and work for parents

*If you have any questions or would like to get involved please contact Marie Harrison/Greenaction at (415) 284-5600 x103 or Tessie Ester/Mothers Committee at (415) 240-8269.*

## **Hunters Point Navy Shipyard**

Hunters Point Navy Shipyard continues to be San Francisco's most contaminated property, especially when it comes to Parcels E and UC-3. The US Navy composed a Proposed Plan to deal with long standing contamination in the area. Unfortunately, the Proposed Plan consists of minimal precautions to protect the health of Bayview residents. The US Navy has ignored comments from POWER and Greenaction which included recommendations to uphold the precautionary principle, a theory that calls for action before the problem or harm is present, when going forth with clean up procedures to ensure no further damage to the health of community members.

Greenaction would like to prevent further harm done to the community by eliminating further cleanup tactics that are known to pose health problems. Instead of removing the contamination, the Navy, the City and the developer want to cap the toxic sites. While capping the contamination may be the lesser of evils, we are opposed to building new homes in close proximity to the toxic site. We are demanding that a bigger buffer zone be created to ensure residents, especially kids, are not living in new homes built too close to this major toxic site. Let's work together to clean Bayview Hunters Point the right way.

## **Leaotis Martin - Fired up!**

Leaotis Martin is a lifetime Bayview Hunters Point resident and a Greenaction activist and outreach worker. Leaotis is now an experienced environmental justice activist and grassroots community leader who works with Greenaction on many demanding issues. Tessie Ester, a leader of the Huntersview Mothers Committee and a board member of Greenaction, started a conversation with Leaotis about environmental racism issues happening in Bayview over five years ago and he has been fighting the injustices ever since.

Leaotis worked with Greenaction on our Diesel Education and Emissions Reduction Project. He educated and collected feedback from truck drivers and school bus drivers regarding the law stating diesel trucks are allowed to idle their diesel trucks for only three minutes. Idling is when an engine is left on when the truck is parked and idling results in harmful emissions polluting the air and threatening the health of residents and the truck drivers themselves.

The cumulative impact of pollution draws Martin's attention to environmental health and justice. He explained how several pollution sources in the

community, not just one, lead to cancer, asthma and other illnesses. He described how learning about environmental racism made it impossible not to care and fight for environmental justice.



Leaotis Martin grew up across the street from shipyard. As a young adult, Leaotis would fish in the bay and later cook what he caught for dinner, unaware of the toxic contamination. "We were not given a fighting chance," Martin exclaimed recalling how "infected" his neighborhood was. Martin has a long family history of illness due to environmental causes starting with his mother dying of cancer. "We are already losing, so we have nothing left to lose," Martin proclaimed to fuel his flame. Leaotis believes that environmental racism and community injustices can no longer plague Bayview Hunters Point. "It is time to stand up and join the fight."

## **Earth Day Action**

Greenaction brought together 66 groups led by people from frontline communities for a historic and inspiring rally and action in front of US EPA Region IX on Earth Day. 500 people from urban, rural and indigenous communities united to demand our government protect people, health and our planet instead of polluters.

Indigenous people with "Idle No More" led a traditional round dance and hundreds peacefully blocked traffic in front of EPA. Kettleman City moms demanded a rejection of permits for expansion of the toxic waste dump. Gonzales residents spoke of their fight against a proposed plasma arc garbage incinerator, and Laotian residents of Richmond denounced Chevron's pollution. We called on President Obama to reject the Keystone XL Pipeline that would bring dirty crude oil from tar sands mining in Canada into the US, threatening our environment and contributing to climate change.



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