



August 26, 2026

Submitted via email to BAAQMD: Attn: Sadegh Sadeghipour ssadeghipour@baaqmd.gov

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice Comments on Cepheid's permit application to BAAQMD (Facility ID: > 24996 / Application No. 738560)

Request for extension of public comment period and public hearing

Request for translation of the public notice and summaries of key documents.

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice submits these comments on Cepheid's application to BAAQMD for their facility located at 6601 Overlake Place, Newark. We submit these comments at the request of local residents, including Greenaction members and parents of children who attend Challenger School – Ardenwood, right next to the Cepheid facility.

In addition, we write to call on BAAQMD to provide meaningful public notice and a meaningful opportunity for non-English speaking and Limited English Proficiency residents and parents to participate. As a significant number of residents do not understand English language documents, it is imperative that BAAQMD provide translated notice and documents to fulfill your mandate and commitment to meaningful civic engagement, civil rights, and environmental justice. The "Public Notice" and documents should be translated into Chinese.

Greenaction also joins the parents and neighbors of the facility in requesting an extension of the public comment period for at least 60 days to allow more community civic engagement on this issue that affects children who are especially vulnerable to air pollution. A permit extension will also allow BAAQMD to translate the Public Notice and summary of key documents.

In light of the serious concerns residents have raised due to the proximity of the facility to a school for young children, we ask BAAQMD to hold a public hearing in Newark on the permit application.

Greenaction urges BAAQMD to deny Cepheid's permit application.

The proposed Cepheid manufacturing facility sits approximately 700 feet from the children's outdoor playground at the Challenger School—a distance shorter than two football fields.

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Allowing the release of nearly 1,800 pounds per year of volatile organic compounds (IPA and Acetone) adjacent to a school facility without secondary filtration or emissions control is fundamentally unacceptable and poses an undue risk to young children and the local community.

This permit must be rejected based on the following critical deficiencies:

1. Failure to Assess Health Risks to Vulnerable Children

The proximity of the source of toxic emissions to a playground where little kids play is a tremendous concern. BAAQMD should err on the side of caution and reject the permit application.

Relying on generic emission thresholds and not conducting even a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) is a major flaw. Challenger School serves young children. Due to higher respiration rates per pound of body mass and routine outdoor physical activity, children face vastly greater exposure risks than standard adult models assume. Generic annual averages completely fail to account for acute exposures on high-wind days.

The wafer stripping and drying process uses acetone and IPA. Acetone is NPOC, and IPA is POC and TAC (toxic air contaminant). BAAQMD should not allow increased emissions of Toxic Air Contaminants right next to a school attended by young children – especially as the playground is so close to the industrial facility.

Exposure to Poly Methyl Methacrylate (PMMA) dust or fumes may cause respiratory irritation and contact with the skin or eyes may cause irritation or allergic reactions. Respiratory effects have also been reported in humans following short-term and long-term inhalation exposure.

Relying on the company's own tests and data is a concern, especially due to the proximity of the school and its playground area to this facility that emits Toxic Air Contaminants. Not requiring Cepheid to use Best Available Control Technology is unacceptable.

A full Environmental Impact Report process (not just a HRA) should be conducted.

2. Dangerous Regulatory Loopholes (Condition #2)

Proposed Permit Condition #2 grants Cepheid blanket authorization to swap toxic solvents or increase usage volume without public disclosure or re-evaluation, provided the total mass remains under a generic cap. This "blanket flexibility" undermines public transparency and leaves parents and neighbors in the dark regarding chemical emissions entering the children's

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school environment. Any future solvent substitution or capacity increase must trigger mandatory public notice and review, with full and meaningful opportunities for civic engagement.

3. Total Lack of Physical Verification and Accountability

The permit relies on theoretical calculations provided by the applicant, with zero mandatory source testing and zero fence-line air monitoring. Expecting a school community to trust unverified corporate self-reporting 700 feet from a playground is fundamentally incompatible with the standard of care owed to young children.

4. Fence-line Monitoring and Independent Testing:

For any permit given to this facility, there must be mandatory fenceline air monitoring and independent third-party emissions testing.

5. BAAQMD's Commitment to Protecting Public Health and Upholding Environmental Justice:

As a frontline environmental justice organization that has engaged with BAAQMD for decades, Greenaction is aware of the Air District's commitment to environmental justice and addressing pollution threats to communities – especially vulnerable residents including young kids. We thus call on BAAQMD to comply with your mission and uphold your commitment to environmental justice and deny Cepheid's permit application.

We also request a meeting with BAAQMD senior staff to discuss this issue prior to any final permit decision.

Respectfully submitted,



Bradley Angel, Executive Director

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