

Community Action

ISSUE 9 - WINTER 2024



Rally For Clean Air

Coming Together for
Environmental Justice

Bloomington Updates

A Community
Stands Tall Against
Warehouse Expansion

Brand New NoX Emission Report:

“The Notorious Nine”

Regenerate and CCAEJ blast top polluting power plants



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This magazine uses the following framework as a core pillar of understanding:

Vital Conditions for Well-Being and Justice



From the Executive Director



Ana Gonzalez
Executive Director

The Center For Community Action
and Environmental Justice

Greetings, CCAEJ Community,

As we step into a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we shared in 2024. This year marked CCAEJ's 45th anniversary—a milestone we celebrated together at our Rising Voices conference. We also achieved critical victories, like the adoption of the Railyard ISR, and saw tremendous growth in our ambassador programs, empowering our community to fight for the justice we deserve.

Yet, this year was not without its challenges. Tough election results reminded us that the road to justice is never easy. These setbacks only strengthened our resolve, and through it all, you—the backbone of CCAEJ—stood firm. Your commitment to our mission turned obstacles into stepping stones, proving once again that the power of our community is unstoppable.

Ending the year with our Holiday Celebration was a beautiful reminder of why we do this work. Seeing ambassadors and community members come together in solidarity filled me with hope for what lies ahead.

In 2025, we aim to grow our ambassador programs and expand our thriving community education initiatives. Together, we can build a larger, stronger base to advocate for cleaner air, safer neighborhoods, and healthier lives. None of this is possible without you—our community, our family.

I invite you to join us in our ambassador programs and become a member of CCAEJ. Together, we will continue this fight for justice, powered by the voices and actions of people like you.

Thank you for your unwavering support. Here's to the victories we will achieve together in 2025!

In solidarity,
Si se puede!

Ana Gonzalez
Executive Director, CCAEJ

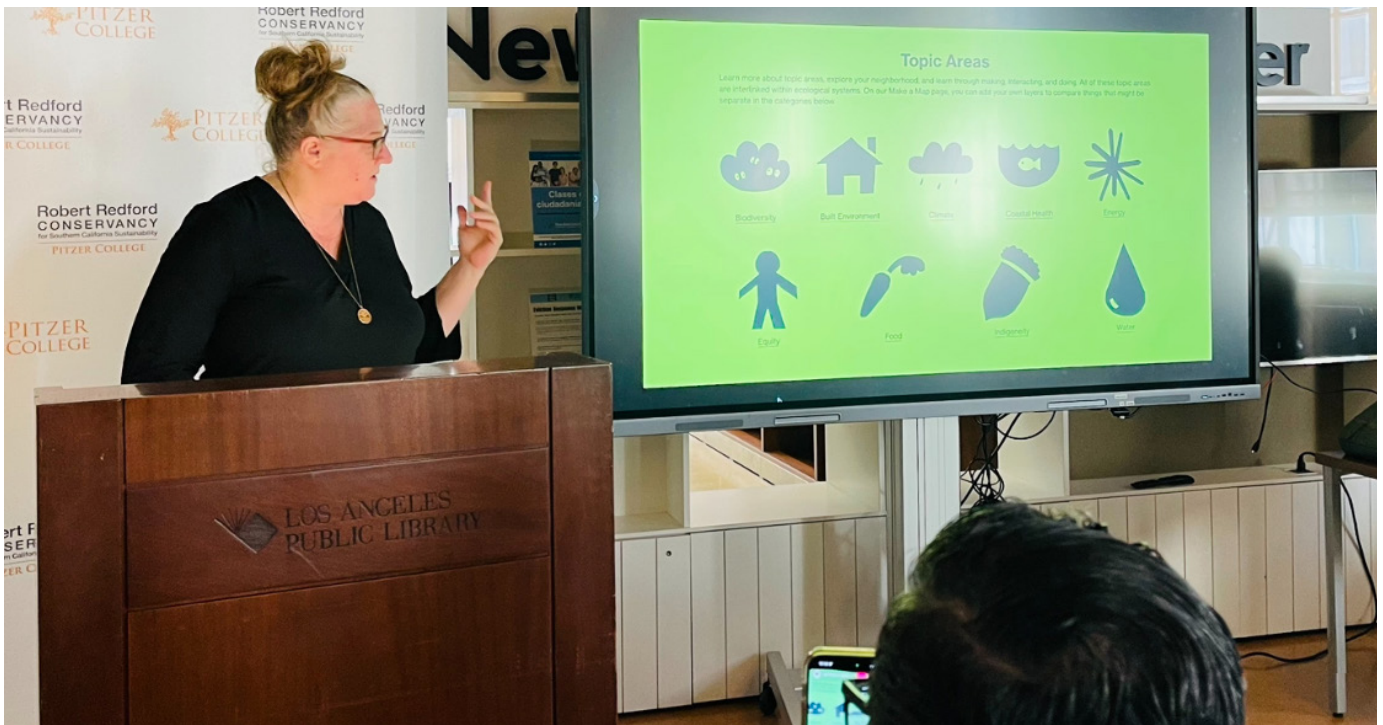
The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAIEJ) is a progressive equity-based organization that embodies hope, unites people y pueblos, to create intersectional solutions that transform communities “to bring people together to improve their social and natural environment.” Utilizing the lens of environmental health, we achieve regenerative change by developing resilient BIPOC intergenerational leadership, through the power of community base-building. Through strategic campaigns, we cultivate inclusive self-sustaining neighborhoods, where everyone can live, work, play, and thrive.



Introducing: SoCal Earth

A Transformative Environmental Justice Tool for the Inland Empire

On October 11 in the heart of downtown Los Angeles at the Los Angeles library, CCAEJ joined the Robert Redford Conservancy as they held a press conference to launch what would be an amazing community tool in SoCal Earth. The Robert Redford Conservancy at Pitzer College have been developing what are called eight user-friendly tools for environmental justice. This tool is uniquely tailored for the inland Empire and uses new data to display the injustices of our region. All the data is sorted into categories, ranging from pollution, air, quality, and equity and much much more, furthermore the tool is geared so that anyone can use it from elementary to grad school. This tool will be vital in sharing information about our underserved EJ communities. We are excited to see where this amazing tool is headed and we encourage everyone to visit socalearth.org and explore for themselves And see how easy it is to find information about their communities.





HRC Presentation at UC Berkeley

CCAIEJ Supports Yvette Vargas' Fellowship Presentation on Human Rights and Environmental Challenges in the Inland Empire



Over this summer, Yvette Vargas has diligently been collecting data and information for her fellowship program through the Human Rights Center at the University of California Berkeley. This fellowship program allows students to travel to remote locations to study and report back about human rights violations, and the necessity for adequate coverage and exposure on these injustices. Yvette focused on the inland region and its crisis dealing with warehouse proliferation and air pollution. She wanted to create a prototype database for CCAIEJ to readily distribute information about the inland region; this whole process culminated in a presentation on October 12th where Yvette delivered her report. Shane Ysais and Steven Carretero both attended as representatives from CCAIEJ for what was a wonderful presentation of not just events but of all of the participants in this program. It was so moving and so emotionally intense. We have nothing but gratitude for all the stories shared, and all of the information gathered, we want to thank Yvette and everyone for inviting us to this wonderful day and we wanna also extend our gratitude for all the work given into this program and given to CCAIEJ. It's these types of collaborations that push our movement forward and continue to raise awareness for human rights around the world.

THE NOTORIOUS NINE



**REGENERATE
CALIFORNIA**
POWER UP CLEAN ENERGY | POWER DOWN DIRTY GAS



***NINE DIRTY POWER PLANTS
LIKELY VIOLATING FEDERAL AIR STANDARDS,
COMMUNITY GROUPS DEMAND SHUTDOWN***



INDUSTRY, Calif. — A recent report has sounded the alarm on the Walnut Creek Energy Park in Los Angeles County, revealing the facility’s likely violation of federal air quality standards. As members of the Regenerate California coalition, CCAEJ joins environmental justice organizations across the state in calling for the immediate shutdown of this methane gas power plant, which endangers nearby neighborhoods and schools.

The report, “The Notorious Nine: Gas Plant Pollution in Environmental Justice Communities,” highlights nine gas-fired power plants across California that exceed federal limits on nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions, with Walnut Creek identified as the highest-risk facility.

“Toxic NOx pollution from this plant, combined with emissions from nearby railroads, warehouses, and the 60 Freeway, exacerbates asthma and other health issues in an already overburdened community,” said Tyler Valdes, Energy Justice Manager with the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA).



Impact on Our Most Vulnerable Communities

The surrounding community, which is 80% Hispanic, already suffers from some of the highest pollution levels in California. Two elementary schools — Mesa Robles and Grazide — are within the plant’s most affected zone. “Our children are breathing in pollution that causes asthma, heart disease, and other serious health problems,” said Dr. Alfred L. Glover, a local public health advocate. “This cannot continue.”

A Clear Path Forward

The findings coincide with the EPA's push to tighten NOx emissions standards nationwide. Along with other coalition partners, CCAEJ is advocating for immediate action to address this environmental and public health crisis. Julia Dowell, Senior Organizer with Sierra Club's Electric Sector Campaign, emphasized the urgency of transitioning to renewable energy: "We must end pollution from dirty fossil fuels and build a clean, renewable energy future."

Policy Recommendations

- The report offers actionable steps to tackle NOx pollution:
- Shut down the most polluting gas plants in disadvantaged communities.
- Require transparent emissions reporting from all gas plants.
- Expand monitoring of startup/shutdown emissions, where NOx spikes dramatically.
- Accelerate California's transition to renewable energy sources.

Standing United for Justice

Regenerate California, a coalition co-led by CEJA and the Sierra Club, brings together organizations like CCAEJ to advocate for a just transition away from gas-fired power plants. We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable communities are no longer the dumping ground for pollution.

At CCAEJ, we believe that everyone deserves clean air and a healthy future. Join us in this fight by supporting our mission to advance environmental justice. Together, we can transition to 100% renewable energy and build a sustainable, equitable future for all.

Take Action:

- Volunteer with CCAEJ to support clean energy advocacy.
- Sign up for updates and actions at Regenerate California.
- Share the report with your networks to amplify this critical issue.

Our communities cannot wait—let's clear the air for future generations.



Civic Engagement Ambassador Program

CCAIEJ's Action for Change Ambassador Program Inspires Community Strength



For the last five weeks, CCAIEJ has been conducting our action for change ambassador program, focusing on civic engagement in our local areas. This program brought together local community members to educate them in civic engagement starting from local agencies and building out civic knowledge. We had many activities such as power mapping our local government. Going over propositions and different initiatives and explaining how these come to be the CCAIEJ goal is that all people should use their privilege of civic duties to help our community become stronger and create the future. With elections this year, we encouraged everyone to understand the importance of having a voice and the decisions that will continue to shape our lives for years to come. Thank you to all the ambassadors for coming in attending and sharing their wonderful stories during our discussions and an engaging and what was some truly amazing dialogue and discourse over the past few weeks. We will continue to have more ambassador programs and further cultivate our local environmental justice champions.





Ballots & Tacos

Fostering Community Dialogue Concerning the Election



On October 25th we held a Ballot Party to give the community a safe space for their families to come out and have these important conversations about the election. Together, while enjoying a delicious plate of free tacos by a local Riverside vendor and freshly baked pan from our local panaderia, we learned about the critical propositions that will shape our community. Whether it is the importance of Rent Control through Voting Yes on Prop 33 or preventing the criminalization of our marginalized communities by Voting No on Prop 36, we covered it. We ensured that the community had important discussions about the Propositions and what their Vote reflects on the Ballot.

Despite these efforts, the election results have presented us with significant setbacks. Potential cuts to essential agencies like the EPA threaten not only our environment but also the vital funding that supports grassroots initiatives like ours. At our recent election debrief, 30 passionate individuals gathered to reflect, strategize, and reaffirm our mission. The road ahead is challenging, but these lessons give us a clearer path for future civic engagement.

This is not the end—it's a rallying cry. CCAEJ will continue educating and mobilizing our community, no matter the obstacles. Our resilience is stronger than any setback, and with your support, we will keep fighting polluters and protecting our communities.



Rialto's Big Win:

Rialto Council Upholds Community Appeal, Advances Environmental Justice



Victory for The Community of RIALTO

In a groundbreaking victory for environmental justice, the Rialto City Council unanimously upheld CCAEJ's community appeal against a controversial warehouse development. This decision marks a significant win for Rialto residents, who rallied together to protect their health, safety, and community well-being.

The proposed warehouse, planned for the corner of Locust Avenue and West Coast Boulevard, would have been just 60-80 feet from homes, posing serious risks by increasing truck traffic and pollution—especially along school routes. Thanks to the tireless efforts of CCAEJ and the voices of over 70% of impacted community members, the project has been halted.

Ana Gonzalez, Executive Director of CCAEJ and a Rialto resident, celebrated the council's decision:

“This has been one of the most heartwarming victories for CCAEJ and the community of Rialto this year. Witnessing the happiness in the eyes of our community members and knowing the health of my family and neighbors is now better protected makes our efforts incredibly worthwhile.”

Special thanks go to community leaders Kelly Valencia, Raul Valencia, Yesenia Ramos, and the more than 40 families who submitted letters and petitions urging the council to prioritize public health and safety.

In addition, the council approved a critical update to its general plan, introducing an Environmental Justice Element aligned with SB1000. This step ensures that Rialto's neighborhoods will be designed with health, inclusivity, and sustainability in mind.

CCA EJ extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated, attended meetings, and supported this campaign. Together, we've shown that community power can lead to real change!



But even with this amazing victory, developers have been working behind the scenes to reintroduce this warehouse. CCAEJ is fully committed to seeing this decision upheld and will continue to fight for the will of the community who continues to voice their opposition of this warehouse.



CCAIEJ and Allies Push AQMD for Cleaner Air:

Vital Rules Delayed, But Hope Remains for 2025



“What do we want? Clean air! When do we want it? Right now!” On Friday, December 6, CCAIEJ and nearly 100 other coalition partners delivered a strong message to the governing board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District to let them know that they are behind on passing vital rules and regulations to protect the air quality in the South Coast Air Basin, namely the Rule 2304 (Ports ISR) and Rules 1111 and 1121 to regulate large boilers. After standing up for the community earlier this year and approving the Railyard ISR in August, we were hopeful that the AQMD would act judiciously and also pass the Ports ISR before the end of 2024.

Unfortunately, we are not going to receive that relief in 2024, but we delivered the message that we are anxiously awaiting them to approve it by the end of the first quarter of 2025. The Ports ISR is not just another rule to put on the books, it is a vital action needed to bring the region into compliance with the Clean Air Act as the San Pedro Bay ports of LA and Long Beach are some of the single biggest contributors to air pollution in the region.

Similarly, Rules 1111 and 1121 would save more lives through better air quality not just in the region at large, but also in homes. It too has been delayed, though “only” until February this time. Nevertheless, we were able to stress the importance of getting those rules passed as they too are vital for meeting federal clean air standards as well as delivering lower costs to consumers over the longer term. We and other coalition partners look forward to returning to the AQMD board in 2025, not to once again ask them to pass the rules, but to celebrate a brighter future as they are approved and will provide cleaner air for all.





Bloomington Community Advocacy Shines

C.A.T.'s Mobilize During NOP Comment Period



On November 14th, we gathered with our Bloomington Community Action Team (CAT) to discuss pressing environmental justice issues. Key topics included updates on our air monitoring program—critical for Bloomington due to heavy industrial development—and community concerns like upcoming street closures and prolonged public safety power shutoffs, with some areas experiencing two days without power.

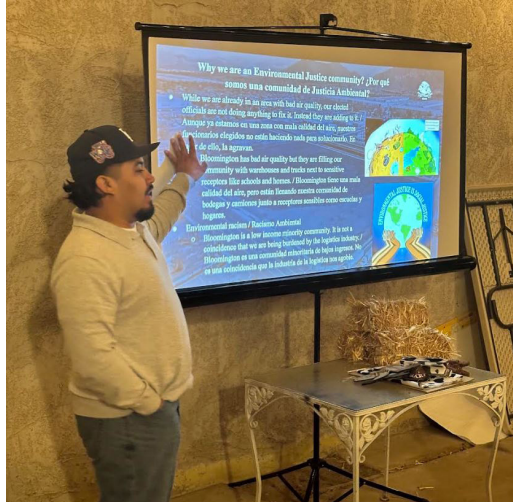
Our CAT meetings are collaborative spaces where community members raise concerns, brainstorm solutions, and share resources. We also provided updates on the recirculation of the Bloomington Business Park Draft Environmental Impact Report Notice of Preparation. The meeting was highly productive, and we're excited to continue working alongside the community to create impactful change.

After securing a hard-fought victory in our CEQA lawsuit against Howard Industrial Partners and the County of San Bernardino, we entered a crucial phase of the process: the Notice of Preparation (NOP) comment period. This victory requires the developer to revise and recirculate their Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to address the deficiencies identified by the court.

The NOP comment period presented a critical opportunity for the community to shape

the future of this project by raising concerns, advocating for thorough environmental analyses, and suggesting how these analyses should be conducted. With just 30 days to act, we rallied together to ensure our voices were heard loud and clear.

CCA EJ hosted a series of community workshops, creating a supportive space where residents could share their stories, understand the EIR process, and craft impactful comment letters. We provided resources and guidance to help community members highlight the ongoing and future harms of the project, including its impacts on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy usage, noise, and overall community well-being.



Through these efforts, 28 community members submitted detailed comment letters, each bringing unique perspectives and raising critical concerns. This collective action demonstrated the power of a united community standing up for environmental justice, accountability, and the health of our neighborhoods.

The NOP comment period was not just a procedural step—it was a powerful reminder of what we can achieve together. As we move forward, we remain committed to ensuring that any future developments prioritize sustainability, equity, and the voices of those most impacted.

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A Heartfelt Thank You

An Unforgettable Holiday Celebration!



As 2024 draws to a close, we at CCAEJ want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who joined us for our year-end Holiday Celebration. This gathering was nothing short of magical, thanks to you!

The potluck was a true testament to the rich and diverse community we share. Every dish told a story, every bite a reminder of the love and care that makes our community so special. The games brought out laughter, friendly competition, and moments of connection that will be cherished well into the new year.

The incredible vibes at the celebration reflected what makes CCAEJ so unique—a collective of passionate individuals coming together to celebrate our shared victories and look forward to the future. It was the perfect way to wrap up a year filled with challenges, achievements, and growth.

As we prepare for 2025, we are more inspired than ever to continue advocating for environmental justice and empowering our communities. This celebration was a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do—because of you, our incredible supporters and friends.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Here's to a new year filled with hope, progress, and more opportunities to celebrate together.

Warmest wishes,

The CCAEJ Team



Join Today To Keep The Momentum!

Join Our Membership Program



More Info at www.ccae.org



Thank You To Our Partners

