

Community Action

ISSUE 9 - FALL 2024

**CEJA
Congreso**

Coming Together for
Environmental Justice

**The
Bloomington
Victory**

A Community
Stands Tall Against
Warehouse Expansion

The Newest Generation of Environmental Justice Leader

Youth 4 Change

CCAEEJ Environmental Justice Youth Program



04

The Railyard ISR & Transportation Justice

Building Healthier Communities

Page 3

11

Toxic Tour With Pomona College

Enlightening New Students to
EJ in the Inland Region

Page 11

16

CEJA Congreso

Coming Together for
Environmental Justice

Page 16

08

Energy Justice Tour With Regenerate CA

Empowering Elected Leaders
Through Environmental Justice

Page 8

12

Action 4 Change Ambassador Program

Keeping our communities
informed & engaged

Page 12

18

Bloomington Victory

Community Orgs Take on the
March JPA

Page 18

10

AB98: CCA EJ's Response

More Progress Needed in
Warehouse Regulations

Page 10

14

Youth 4 Change

Youth Focused
Environmental Justice Summit

Page 14

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 look back on the past few months, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible work our community has accomplished. CCAEJ stands on the shoulders of the dedicated individuals and families who continually show up for their neighbors, fight for cleaner air, and advocate for a healthier future. Every step we've taken, from pushing for stronger legislation to securing victories like the Railyard Indirect Source Rule, has been made possible because of you—our community.

While recent policies like AB 98 provide a starting point, they don't fully protect our most vulnerable from the dangers of diesel emissions and pollution. But we know this: our strength lies in our collective voice. We have demonstrated time and again that when we unite, we can influence change. Our collaboration with labor, health, and environmental justice advocates will continue to expand as we push for the transparency, accountability, and health protections our communities deserve.

As we move forward, I am excited for the new opportunities ahead, knowing that together we will continue to build on these efforts and shape a future where environmental justice is a reality for all.

Si se puede!

In solidarity,
Executive Director, CCAEJ

The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ) 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.

Transportation Justice

Building Healthier Communities

At CCAEJ, our mission is clear: to transform transportation into a force for good in our communities. This journey began with the Regional Rail Convening, where we brought together diverse voices from across the nation to rethink how our rail system could better serve the health and well-being of our neighborhoods.

During the Convening, we explored the history of our railways, examined cutting-edge green rail technologies, and most importantly, empowered our communities with the knowledge and tools needed to drive change. It was an inspiring and eye-opening experience, but it was just the beginning of something much larger.

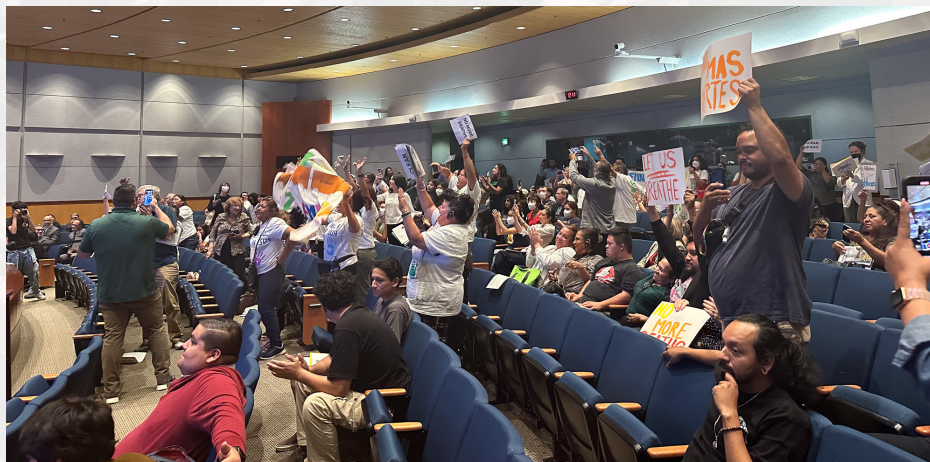
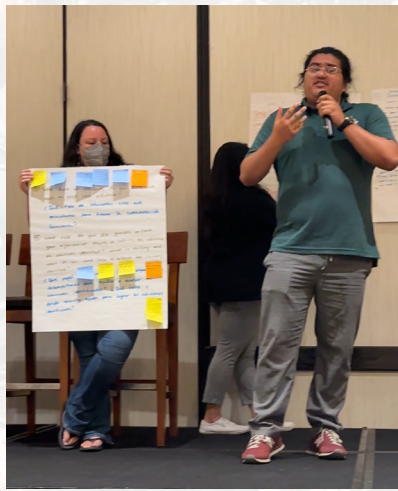


Building on the energy from the Convening, we launched the Transportation Justice Ambassador Program. This program was designed to unite passionate advocates from all walks of life, giving them the platform and support to amplify the power of our communities. These ambassadors didn't just participate—they became leaders, driving our collective efforts forward with dedication and heart.

With our ambassadors leading the charge, we set our sights on a crucial goal: securing cleaner air for our communities. On August 2nd, we mobilized for the SCAQMD board meeting, armed with the knowledge, support, and determination that our community had cultivated. And we achieved a significant victory—the passing of the Railyard Indirect Source Rule. This was not just a win for environmental justice; it was a promise of a healthier future for generations to come.

However, our work is far from done. We've made incredible strides towards a more sustainable and just transportation system, but there's much more to accomplish. The path ahead is challenging, but with your support, we can continue to make meaningful progress. We invite you to join us in this ongoing fight by becoming part of our upcoming Civic Engagement Ambassador Program. This is your chance to play a key role in shaping the future of your community, ensuring that it remains vibrant, healthy, and just for all.

To see the impact we've already made, take a moment to watch our latest video on Instagram. It's a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we come together. The journey continues, and we need you with us. Together, we can create lasting change.





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GENERATE CALIFORNIA

CLEAN ENERGY | POWER DOWN DIRTY GAS

Justice Tour

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Empowering Elected Leaders

An Energy Justice Tour with Regenerate CA

By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator CCAEJ

On Wednesday, September 18, the Regenerate Coalition—comprised of CCAEJ, CAUSE, CBE, CEJA, and Sierra Club—came together for a trans-formative Energy Justice Tour. The tour aimed to shed light on the many challenges environmental justice (EJ) communities face when it comes to power plants and clean energy.

Our journey began in Wilmington, where community members shared their experiences living in one of the most polluted areas between the ports. As we witnessed the scenes around us, it became clear that the burden of this pollution weighs heavily on the residents. We then traveled to Long Beach, where we visited a gas-powered power plant slated for retirement next year. Despite being maintained in the name of grid reliability, these plants have failed in times of need, proving inefficient and costly to keep running.

Finally, we toured an affordable housing project featuring rooftop solar panels, which will soon be tied into the power grid. This project represents a model of community solar, offering renters potential savings and showing the possibilities of clean, locally generated energy.





Throughout the day, decision-makers from the California Energy Commission (CEC), California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and other stakeholders engaged in meaningful discussions. We extend our gratitude to everyone who participated, especially the community members who courageously shared their stories. This tour underscored the critical work that lies ahead to correct the injustices in our communities and build a cleaner, brighter future through sustainable energy.





AB98 CCAEJ's Response

More Progress Needed in Warehouse Regulations



Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 98: Planning and zoning: logistics use: truck routes into law. AB 98 has been a controversial piece of legislation that attempts to address the statewide crisis facing frontline communities by providing warehouse design and building standards. The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAIEJ), which has been at the forefront of advocating for safer and healthier community standards around logistics developments, acknowledges the effort but points to areas where improvements are necessary.

“Today marks a complex moment for us at CCAIEJ,” stated Ana Gonzalez, Executive Director of CCAIEJ. “While AB 98 establishes a foundational framework for logistics operations that includes some of our long-advocated improvements, it falls short in properly safeguarding our communities from the real dangers of diesel emissions and the subsequent health impacts. The prescribed setbacks from dock bays to sensitive receptor property lines do not do enough to protect our people.”

Since 2016, CCAIEJ has collaborated with Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes and Senator Connie Leyva to push for comprehensive legislative changes that address the environmental and health impacts of large-scale logistic developments. This legislation is a product of these efforts but does not fully meet CCAIEJ's goals.

“Nevertheless, we see elements within this bill—like the inclusion of air monitoring and improved circulation elements—that will be crucial tools in our ongoing advocacy to demonstrate the detrimental impacts of warehousing on neighborhood health,” Gonzalez added. “We extend our thanks to Assemblymember Reyes for her relentless dedication to the Inland Empire including her past bill AB1000. Her work has brought forth stronger protection measures in other bills, and we remain hopeful that we can build on these foundations to enhance AB 98, we are still a Region in Crisis.”

CCAIEJ also emphasizes the need for a broader coalition and continued advocacy. “Moving forward, we will collaborate with labor groups and other stakeholders to address economic, labor, and health justice issues. We firmly believe that these are inseparable from our pursuit of environmental justice,” Gonzalez concluded.

As this bill becomes law, CCAIEJ remains committed to using every tool available, including CEQA, to ensure that forthcoming regulations serve the best interest of overburdened communities and create truly sustainable, inclusive neighborhoods. The journey towards truly protective community standards goes on, and CCAIEJ is dedicated to leading the charge.

Toxic Tour With Pomona College

Addressing Transportation Pollution and Upcoming Environmental Decisions to Protect Our Communities



On August 19, CCAEJ had the privilege of partnering with Pomona College and The Draper Center to host a trans-formative toxic tour for incoming freshmen. This tour wasn't just about exploring the realities beyond the campus bubble—it was about inspiring the next generation to take an active role in shaping a more just and sustainable world.

As these bright young minds step into their academic journeys, we emphasized the importance of staying connected to the surrounding communities. Environmental justice isn't just an academic concept; it's a call to action that intersects with every field. Our goal is to empower these students to become community leaders who will champion the cause of environmental justice, using their education not only to advance themselves but to uplift those around the world.

This collaboration is a testament to our belief that the youth hold the key to creating lasting change in our most undeserved communities. By fostering their passion and equipping them with the knowledge and tools they need, we are laying the groundwork for a brighter future.



Action 4 Change Ambassador Program

Keeping our communities informed & engaged



By Shane Ysais, Communications Coordinator CCAEJ

On a bright Saturday morning in Jurupa Valley, a group of passionate community members gathered at CCAEJ's headquarters, ready to take the first steps in becoming advocates for civic engagement. The excitement in the room was palpable as we kicked off our Action for Change Ambassador Program, a series of empowering workshops designed to demystify the political process and equip participants with the tools to take meaningful civic action.

Running every Saturday from September 14th until October 12th, this program offers a comprehensive look at civic engagement and its impact on our daily lives. Topics like Civic Engagement History, The Political System & Voting Importance, Equity & Power Dynamics, and Ballot Resources are at the core of these sessions. In the first class, we explored the foundations of civic engagement, tracing its roots in social movements and community organizing. The discussions were rich with personal stories and insights from participants of all backgrounds, creating an environment where everyone felt empowered to share their perspectives on how the political system has shaped their lives.

The program is built on the belief that civic engagement goes beyond just voting. It's

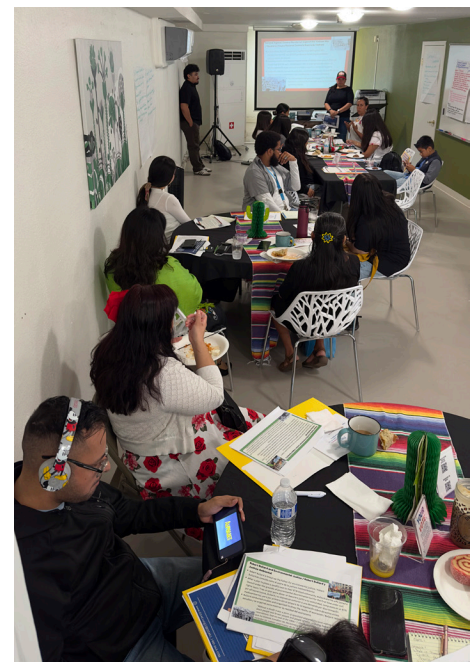


about understanding the systems of power that influence our communities and finding ways to actively participate in shaping those systems. By equipping participants with practical knowledge and tools, such as how to navigate ballot resources or engage with local government, Action for Change seeks to foster a new generation of community leaders who are informed, engaged, and ready to create change.

At a time when many feel disconnected from politics, this program provides an essential bridge between the community and the institutions that are meant to represent it. By building a deeper understanding of the political process and the importance of civic participation, we are ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities are heard and that the power to create change is within their reach.

As the program progresses, we look forward to seeing how our ambassadors will apply their new-found knowledge and skills to advocate for justice and equity within their communities. This first session was just the beginning of what promises to be a trans-formative journey, and CCAEJ is proud to be at the forefront of empowering our community through civic action.

At the heart of CCAEJ's mission is the belief that real change starts with education and community power. The Action for Change Ambassador Program is not just a series of workshops—it's a movement, sparking the next generation of change makers ready to build a more just and equitable society. Together, we are turning knowledge into action, ensuring that our community is not only informed but empowered to take charge of its future.





Community Testimony: Youth 4 Change

Youth Focused Environmental Justice Summit



By Melanie Robles, Stanford University

Hello, community! I'm Melanie Robles, a CCAEJ organizing fellow this summer. I graduated from Rialto High and am a rising sophomore at Stanford, studying public policy and minoring in environmental justice. My passion for EJ began at a CCAEJ virtual youth summit in 2021, inspiring me to create a similar empowering in-person event for Inland Valley high school students. I'm excited to share highlights from the Youth4Change EJ Summit and reflect on what made it so special.

All geared up in our youth4change black t-shirts, at a brisk 6:30am, we started the day off loading the party bus and heading off to our toxic tour. Our very own Executive Director Ana Gonzalez led the toxic tour where we visited and had conversations about various polluting sites within our community. Our cohort had the opportunity to visit and learn more about the warehouses next to Jurupa Valley High School, the Bloomington Park Specific Plan, Ruben Campos Community Park which is overburdened by truck traffic and railyard pollution, and the outdated Edison power plants. The students listened intently, vigorously took notes, and had so many questions of:



“Why?”

“Why does our community receive the short end of the stick?”

“Why don’t they [developers] meet us halfway?”

I was inspired by their sense of curiosity and passion for EJ and their insightful discussions of solutions. Fired up after our toxic tour the youth got to work on their group action plans identifying one specific issue they would like to target and coming up with a campaign. One group worked on mitigation efforts from the Ontario airport, another group worked on developing a community club that increases participation in city council meetings, and another group wanted to see more green spaces. Next, Joaquin Castillejos, our organizing coordinator walked them through power mapping. Everyone drew a large plus across their poster laughing as they wrote “opps” on one end of their map and “besties” on the other side and identified how to build power within their campaign.

The rest of the day included a college panel where our volunteer college counselors from SBVC, UC Riverside, and Stanford answered questions about the college application process, navigating higher education institutions as first-generation students, clubs, and more! Of course, we had to save time for some fun with a scavenger hunt, a hike, time to eat, explore the park, and of course swing on the swings, slide down the slides, and attempt the monkey bars in the playground.

Thank you to everyone who participated and supported this project! I hope that the CCAEJ youth summit will become an annual event only growing in size, see you next year!





CEJA Congreso

Coming Together for Environmental Justice



On August 5th & 6th, CCAEJ joined forces with several community leaders to journey to Sacramento for what can only be described as a transformative and inspiring experience—CEJA's Congreso. As a proud member of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), this annual event stands as the crown jewel of our collective efforts, bringing together hundreds of activists from across the state who are passionate about environmental justice.

The energy in the room was palpable as the library floor filled with voices united for a common cause. We engaged in dynamic workshops, thought-provoking presentations, and heartfelt discussions on critical topics ranging from retiring gas plants to green zones and groundbreaking new policy legislation. These sessions offered us a deep dive into the essence of our environmental justice communities, highlighting both the challenges we face and the innovative solutions we're championing.

One of the most powerful aspects of Congreso was the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals who share our vision for a just and sustainable future. The sense of solidarity was overwhelming, reminding us all that the strength of our movement lies in our unity. Together, we are not just advocating for change—we are creating it.





Day two was equally impactful, as we took our voices to the halls of power with lobby visits to our local government officials in Sacramento. It was awe-inspiring to witness community members confidently advocating for our EJ communities, backed by the collective strength of our united voices. These interactions served as a powerful reminder that when we stand together, we have the power to shape the policies that affect our lives and our environment.

The Congreso concluded with a celebratory award ceremony, where we took a moment to honor the incredible work being done across the state and to reflect on the progress we've made together. This event was more than just a gathering; it was a powerful affirmation of the strength and resilience of our communities.

As we look to the future, let's continue this momentum. Stay connected with the work that's changing our world by following CEJA on social media, and let's keep building the movement that will bring about the environmental justice we all deserve.





Bloomington Victory

Community Orgs Take on the March JPA



VICTORY FOR BLOOMINGTON COMMUNITY

In a landmark decision that signals a triumph for environmental justice advocates, San Bernardino County Judge Donald Alvarez has halted the Bloomington Business Park Specific Plan. This ruling is a significant win for the Bloomington community, which has been fighting the project with the support of organizations like the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ). The court's decision requires the county to reassess the environmental impacts of the project, which threatened to displace 117 homes and replace 213 acres of rural land with massive warehouses.

Judge Alvarez's ruling cited numerous violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The court found that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) failed in several critical areas: it did not present a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, inadequately addressed air quality issues, and failed to support its findings on greenhouse gas emissions with substantial evidence. Additionally, the report did not properly consider renewable energy options, failed to back its cumulative energy impact findings, and neglected to analyze the impact of construction noise adequately. The county and developers are now prohibited from advancing the project until these violations are fully addressed.

This project, which included plans to sell Zimmerman Elementary School—serving a predominantly Spanish-speaking community—sparked outrage from residents concerned about losing their rural way of life to industrialization. For years, community members voiced their fears about the project's potential to erode Bloomington's unique character and worsen air quality in a region already plagued by pollution from logistics facilities.

“We at CCAEJ are happy, relieved, and inspired by the court’s decision,” said Ana Gonzalez, Executive Director of CCAEJ. “This ruling not only highlights the legal missteps of the county and developers but also affirms the community’s unwavering advocacy. Our fight to protect our neighborhoods is far from over, but this victory strengthens our resolve to continue pushing for a healthy, sustainable future. We are deeply grateful to our attorneys at EarthJustice for their outstanding work.” Marla Matime, Chair of CCAEJ’s Board of Directors, emphasized the broader implications of the ruling: “Understanding how our recent legislation [SB98] could have influenced the development of new warehouses in the region, this ruling shows we still have a fighting chance to ensure our families breathe clean air. It’s reassuring to see that those in decision-making positions are listening to the community and leading with care and discernment.”

For Joaquin Castillejos, CCAEJ Organizing Coordinator and Bloomington resident, the victory is deeply personal. “This decision marks a major victory for Bloomington and environmental justice advocates throughout the Inland Valley. The logistics industry’s unchecked expansion has been a long, challenging fight, but this win shows that when our community stands together, we can prevail. As someone who grew up in Bloomington, this fills me with hope for the future, and I’m eager to continue organizing alongside my neighbors to shape that future.”

The battle against the Bloomington Business Park has underscored the community’s commitment to preserving both its rural culture and environmental health. As the county is forced to re-evaluate the plan, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice remains steadfast in its mission to unite and empower local communities. This ruling is not just a win for Bloomington—it is a critical step forward in ensuring the Inland Valley’s communities can live in safe, healthy environments, free from the unchecked expansion of polluting industries.



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More Info at www.ccaej.org



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