

Eastern Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Data Project: Information Resource Guide

This information resource guide provides an overview of articles and other resources about environmental justice-related issues in the Eastern Coachella Valley (Riverside County). It is intended to help inform community building, education, organizing, and advocacy in the region: putting the power of knowledge in hands of those who are working to improve health and well-being in the region.

The resource guide includes a wide range of media, including academic articles, newspaper articles, maps, reports from non-profit organizations and government agencies, websites, and documentaries. Each source is “tagged” with one or more of seven issue areas: Environment, Social Vulnerability, Health, Housing, Economic, Land Use, and Civic Engagement. Entries provide a brief summary, key points, and corresponding page numbers when available. Most entries include live links to the source location so that the user may access the full document or website.

In addition to the printed document format, the resource guide is also available online. The URL will be available soon. The digital version is searchable by keyword, which allows the user to specify geographic location and issue area. The website also allows users to submit new materials or to add comments on existing resources for posting by the resource guide moderator. This enables users to actively participate in bibliography maintenance, ensuring that it remains current and relevant.

This information resource guide was created by the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, in partnership with the California Institute for Rural Studies and with funding from The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities Eastern Coachella Valley initiative.

ENVIRONMENT

Bacon, D. (2012, March 3). Imperial Valley Residents Must Fight for Right to Breathe Clean Air. *New American Media*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://newamericamedia.org/2012/03/imperial-valley-residents-must-fight-for-right-to-breathe-clean-air.php>" <http://newamericamedia.org/2012/03/imperial-valley-residents-must-fight-for-right-to-breathe-clean-air.php>.

The article details some of the prevalent problems residents of Seeley and Herber (two unincorporated communities in Imperial County) face, including poor public lighting, poor water access, and health-risks from air pollutants.

Several state-wide advocacy groups are mentioned in the article, including Policy Link and CRLA, as well as community-based groups like Seeley Citizens United, Comite Civico, and the Imperial County Environmental Justice Enforcement Task Force.

California Department of Toxic Substances Control. (2010). *Western Environmental, Inc. Updates*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/WEI.cfm>" <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/WEI.cfm>

This website details some of the work EPA has done concerning WEI.

The website makes available several resources, including statistics about the plant's hazardous waste output (5x more in 2009 than previous years), and charts about the waste the facility processes, including types and quantities.

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (2010). *Safe and Affordable Water for All*. Annual Report, 2010, p. 12-23. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.crla.org/sites/all/files/content/uploads/AnnualReports/CRLA-AR10-Final.pdf>" <http://www.crla.org/sites/all/files/content/uploads/AnnualReports/CRLA-AR10-Final.pdf>

CRLA Annual Report includes profiles of key cases. Pages 12-13 discuss arsenic-contaminated water in Coachella and how property managers in the area overcharge residents for unused and unsafe water.

Briefly touches on how the community worked together to protest the situation.

Includes quotes from Assembly Member Victor Manuel Perez who authored legislation AB 2515 that would require the installation of certified filtration systems.

California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control. (2012). *Evaluation Survey: Western Environmental, Inc. 62-150 Gene Welmas Drive, Mecca, California 92254*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/WEI_EvaluationSurveyReport_20120502.pdf" http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/WEI_EvaluationSurveyReport_20120502.pdf

The report compiles several conclusions, recommendations, and files gathered from a DTS visit to WEI in 2011.

The report includes 19 recommendations (p. 12-17) for WEI.

Photographs of the facility can be found under Appendix B.

California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control. (2012). *Executive Summary—Evaluation Survey: Western Environmental, Inc. 62-150*

Gene Welmas Drive, Mecca, California 92254. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/WEI_ExecutiveSummaryEvaluationSurvey_20120502.pdf"
http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/WEI_ExecutiveSummaryEvaluationSurvey_20120502.pdf

The executive summary briefly details the results from the WEI evaluation survey, and concludes that the facility does not meet California hazardous waste requirements “in a number of significant areas.”

A more detailed account of the report can be found under the Evaluation Survey.

Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group. (n.d.) *Integrated Regional Water Management Planning*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.cvrwmg.org/docs/2009_10_06_IRWM_Fact_Sheet.pdf" http://www.cvrwmg.org/docs/2009_10_06_IRWM_Fact_Sheet.pdf

IRWM Planning is a process by which multiple agencies within a region work collaboratively to better the region’s water quality and supply in an inclusive way. The management group includes the valley’s five water purveyors, who have come together to improve water resource planning and management for the entire region. Possible projects include: increasing water supply and improving water quality. The website includes several service area maps on the communities served.

Danelski, D. (2012, January 17). Mecca: Tribe agrees to air quality rules. *The Press Enterprise (Riverside, CA)*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.pe.com/local-news/topics/topics-environment-headlines/20120117-mecca-tribe-agrees-to-air-quality-rules.ece>" <http://www.pe.com/local-news/topics/topics-environment-headlines/20120117-mecca-tribe-agrees-to-air-quality-rules.ece>

This article deals with the Cabazon tribe agreeing to comply with the SCAQMD’s 39 air quality rules following several complaints from the community.

Luis Olmedo from Comit  Civico Del Valle points out that the agreement fails to affect facilities that are more than 50% owned by the tribe or Colmac Energy Inc, another plant on the Cabazon Tribe site in question.

EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 (Pacific Southwest). (2011). *Unilateral Administrative Order: EPA Docket No. RCRA 7003-09-2011-003*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/enforcement/pdf/UAO-Consolidated-Tire.pdf>" <http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/enforcement/pdf/UAO-Consolidated-Tire.pdf>

This Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) looks at the land owned by the Cabazon Tribe. EPA approved the facility to hold 44,000 tires, but in May 11, 2011 they were informed it now held 90,000. A fire broke out on May 17, 2011 and made the facility a fire hazard concern. The tribe issued a Notice of Violation and Order to Comply requiring the facility to address fire hazards.

Overall, the EPA determined that the facility is an imminent danger to human health and the environment.

Fox News, Latino. (2011, February 16). *Foul, Grassy Odor in Mecca, California, May Be Sickening Residents*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/health/2011/02/16/mystery-odor-mecca-california-sickening-residents/>" <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/health/2011/02/16/mystery-odor-mecca-california-sickening-residents/>

This article was published 2 months after the reported illnesses occurred at Saul Martinez Elementary School, which continue to be problem.

The EPA was not convinced the blame fell entirely on the recycling plant.

Grosjean D. and E.L. Williams II. (1992). Photochemical Pollution at Two Southern California Smog Receptor Sites. *Journal of the Air Waste Management Association*.

Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://pubs.awma.org/gsearch/journal/1992/6/42_06_805.pdf" http://pubs.awma.org/gsearch/journal/1992/6/42_06_805.pdf

The report details a one-year survey evaluating the transport of photochemical smog from the Los Angeles area, and assesses population exposure to toxic air pollutants in the Coachella Valley and eastern Riverside County. Two receptor sites were established for 24-hour sample collection in Perris and Palm Springs.

Ambient concentrations of all chemicals searched for can be found on page 807 along with a summary of seasonal variance (Table I and Table II).

Table III compares concentrations of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and a concentration ratio of the two at selected locations; comparatively, concentrations of the two chemicals are highest in Palm Spring and Perris.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca's Misery, Chapter 5: Neighbors feel trapped. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240353/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-neighbors-trapped-unbearable-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240353/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-neighbors-trapped-unbearable-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

The Desert Sun compiled the total number of smell complaints received by the South Coast Air Quality Management District between December 2010 and June 2011. The final total is 228. A table of the complaints can be found at HYPERLINK "http://cmsimg.gdn.mydesert.com/apps/pbcsi.dll/bilde?"

Site=J1&Date=20120325&Category=NEWS07&ArtNo=203240353&Ref=AR&MaxW=300&Border=0&Mecca-smell-odor-misery-neighbors-trapped-unbearable-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun" <http://cmsimg.gdn.mydesert.com>

Neighboring communities report feeling "trapped" by the odors, which at times prevent them from opening windows and going outside. Some have complained to WEI, but employees would blame nearby agricultural fields.

The other company residing on the same plot of tribal land, Colmac Energy, fears WEI's work might hurt their business. Unlike WEI, Colmac signed an air quality monitoring and enforcement agreement with AQMD, the Cabazon tribe, Riverside County and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments prior to starting operations. Colmac brought concerns to the tribe, but nothing has been done.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca's Misery: 'Unbearable Stench' overwhelms desert town. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240345/-UNBEARABLE-STENCH" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240345/-UNBEARABLE-STENCH>

The Desert Sun staff conducted its own investigation into Western Environmental and reports the following:

Western has denied being the source of the smells reported by the surrounding community.

Western accepted the majority of its sewage between 2010 and 2011, "the same

period that the smells reported by neighbors intensified.” Former workers say the plant took in “so much material it was impossible to treat it all.”

Former workers report becoming sick after working at the plant, and accidentally tearing the plastic lining beneath the plant, allowing chemicals to seep into the ground.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca’s Misery, Chapter 3: Western Environmental Inc. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240347>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240347>

Public records show that the DTSC's criminal division opened an investigation into Western's operation in December 2004, which ended in January 2010 with no action taken.

EPA officials have done unannounced inspections of WEI but have not found any violations of federal law or the tribal permit.

Western has largely benefited from being on tribal lands; it has avoided the permitting process and inspections, avoided paying state waste disposal fees, licensing fees, or property taxes.

Western’s facility is suspected of being significantly cheaper than other facilities; “By choosing Western over the Kettleman Hills and Buttonwillow landfills, LAUSD saved nearly \$1.9 million.”

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca’s Misery, Chapter 4: Western Environmental Workers. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240352/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Western-Environmental-workers-headaches-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240352/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Western-Environmental-workers-headaches-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

Former workers of the plant report suffering from nausea, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, and other symptoms from the waste fumes.

The former workers claim they were poorly protected from the waste they were managing. At Kettleman Hills, another waste site, all hazardous waste transporters must wear coveralls, some type of respirator, gloves, goggles and glasses, steel toe boots and a hard hat, according to Waste Management's policies.

HYPERLINK "<http://cmsimg.gdn.mydesert.com/apps/pbcsi.dll/bilde?Site=J1&Date=20120325&Category=NEWS07&ArtNo=203240352&Ref=AR&MaxW=300&Border=0&Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Western-Environmental-workers-headaches-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>" Using a Google satellite image from 2009, former workers indicate waste piles and estimate their height. The image can be found at <http://cmsimg.gdn.mydesert.com>

Honoré, M. (2012, March 26). Soil report due in April for Western Environmental hazard treatment plant in Mecca. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120326/NEWS08/203260327/Soil-report-due-next-month-Mecca-plant>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120326/NEWS08/203260327/Soil-report-due-next-month-Mecca-plant>

An “exploratory survey” of the plant could determine if Western continues operations in Mecca; increased environmental standards might prove to be too costly to continue operations.

The report might call for more stringent environmental standards, including a protecting groundwater with a double polythylene liner, and more wells to monitor groundwater.

Mark Patton, a Western consultant, doesn't believe the plants will be asked to add an extra liner layer because it's a "hazardous waste treatment facility, and not a permanent landfill," although, according to Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) officials, a double liner has been a California standard for 25 years.

Ostro, B.D., R Broadwin, and M.J. Lipsett. (2000). Coarse and fine particles and daily mortality in the Coachella Valley, California: a follow-up study. *Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.nature.com/jes/journal/v10/n5/pdf/7500094a.pdf" <http://www.nature.com/jes/journal/v10/n5/pdf/7500094a.pdf>

This study intends to repeat an earlier investigation done by Ostro, Hurley, and Lipsett, published in 1999. The previous study looked at the link between mortality in the Coachella Valley and PM10, while this study looks at the fraction of coarse mode particles (between 2.5 and 10 μ m in diameter).

Data was gathered from site in Palm Springs and Indio for 2.5 years

The study concludes that there is no strong evidence of a correlation between high wind events, when coarse particulate matter is most concentrated, and daily mortality.

The study asserts finding a consistent association between PM 10 and the coarse fractions and daily cardiovascular mortality.

Ostro, B.D., S. Hurley, and M.J. Lipsett. (1999). Air Pollution and Daily Mortality in the Coachella Valley, California: A Study of PM10 Dominated by Coarse Particles. *Environmental Research*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935199939786" <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935199939786>

This study gathered pollutant concentration information from a Palm Springs data site and an Indio site, while mortality information was gathered from the California Department of Health Services, Health Data and Statistics Branch.

The time period of study was from August 1, 1989, through October 31, 1992, a total of 1188 days.

This study finds evidence for a mortality effect of PM10 in an area where the particulate mass is dominated by coarse particles.

Pastor, M., Sadd, J., Morello-Frosch, R., Scoggins, J., Jesdale, B. (2011). Playing it Safe: Assessing Cumulative Impact and Vulnerability Through an Environmental Justice Screening Method in the South Coast Air Basin, California. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Vol. 8 (5), pp. 1441-1459. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/8/5/1441" <http://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/8/5/1441>

This study looks at the South Coast Air Basin, specifically, the greater Los Angeles region.

According to the authors, as of 2011 few environmental justice assessments fail to include factors beyond chemical-by-chemical and source-specific assessment of potential health risk of environmental hazards.

This study seeks to include environmental and social stressors faced in vulnerable communities, and combine these with other factors to create a cumulative impacts

(CI) score. The twenty-three indicators used (under three categories) can be found on Table I (p. 1444).

Figures 3-6 shows the scores for hazard proximity, air pollution, social and health vulnerability, and the total cumulative impact quintile scores.

South Coast Air Quality Management District. (2011, April 1). *Odor Investigation and Air Sampling in Mecca, CA*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.aqmd.gov/tao/Mecca/MeccaOdorStudy.htm>" <http://www.aqmd.gov/tao/Mecca/MeccaOdorStudy.htm>

“The AQMD has identified Western Environmental, Inc. and their co-owned adjacent facility, Waste Reduction Technologies, as the primary source of the odors.”

“There have been no elevated levels of toxic pollutants detected in the community. However, there are still known health impacts resulting from exposure to strong and objectionable odors, and the AQMD takes these health impacts seriously.”

South Coast Air Quality Management District. (1997). Chapter 8: Future Air Quality –Desert Nonattainment Areas . *Final 1997 Air Quality Management Plan*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/97aqmp/chapters/m-chap8.html>" <http://www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/97aqmp/chapters/m-chap8.html>

Coachella Valley exceeds the federal ozone standard and is classified as a “serious” nonattainment area; the District recommends a re-designation to “Severe-15.”

Air quality standards in the Coachella Valley are impacted by the South Coast Air Basin emissions; the District believes that aggressive control of the South Coast is an effective strategy to substantially improve air quality in the Coachella Valley.

Table 8-4A and 8-4B show a summary of further progress calculations for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and mono-nitrogen oxides (NO_x).

The attainment date for meeting ozone standards is set to 2019.

The District predicts that the Coachella Valley will see an increase in population, from 490,226 in 2010 to 619,900 in 2020.

Wood, D.B. (2012, April 26). Saga of California’s Salton Sea: a tragic chapter ahead? *The Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2012/0426/Saga-of-California-s-Salton-Sea-a-tragic-chapter-ahead>" <http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2012/0426/Saga-of-California-s-Salton-Sea-a-tragic-chapter-ahead>

Recent data shows that the Salton Sea is shrinking much faster than anticipated because of a decrease in agricultural runoff which is the main contributor in maintaining water levels.

This shrinking will result in the exposure of contaminants from decades of agricultural runoff (selenium and arsenic). The contaminants will be “whipped by high winds, carried far afield, threatening the health of people and wildlife.”

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Azevedo, K.J. (2000). *Health Care Access Among California Farmworker Households in the Desert Southwest*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, Prof. Arthur J. Rubel, Chair, ix + 227 pp.

Dr. Azevedo is a medical anthropologist whose dissertation research comprised lengthy residence and field research in the East Coachella Valley. Her thesis reports on risks to health status and access to care among full-time farmworker households in Mecca, California. Interviews were conducted among members of 130 households during the two-and-one-half year period from February 1997 through June 1999.

California Institute for Rural Studies. (2010). *Organizing for Community Health: The Poder Popular Promotores Comunitarios de Salud, Strategy 2005-2008*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.ncfh.org/pdfs/2k9/8456.pdf>" <http://www.ncfh.org/pdfs/2k9/8456.pdf>

“The current report presents a synthesis of lessons learned from the evaluation [of the *Poder Popular Promotores Comunitarios de Salud* program], which covered three years of program implementation by 15 grantees in seven sites, encompassing 20 communities. The aim of this focus is to contribute to future program design, implementation and organizational self-assessment.”

The report provides a view of community life via evaluation of the work of the *promotores*. Details the strengths and weaknesses of the program; highlights lack of education in the community and language barriers.

California Institute for Rural Studies. (2002). *Pathways to Farmworker Health Care, Case Study No. 1: The East Coachella Valley*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/CaseStudyCoachella.pdf>" <http://www.cirsinc.org/phocadownload/CaseStudyCoachella.pdf>

This case study focuses on evaluating farmworker living and working conditions and examine the channels and barriers to service delivery that exist within and outside the sub-region.

The study provides a detailed description of health conditions in the Eastern Coachella Valley in areas such as general demographics, farmworker housing conditions, channels and barriers to health care, and community-based intervention options.

Du Bry, T. (2007). *Immigrants, settlers, and laborers: The socioeconomic transformation of a farming community*. New York: LFB Scholarly Pub. LLC.

Dr. Du Bry examines economic development in the East Coachella Valley through the family histories of Mexican immigrant farmworker families. His thesis reports findings based on several years of field research in Mecca, California.

From his work he draws conclusions about some of the occupations available to the farming community in Coachella.

Guevara, E. (2012, May 23). *Community View: mecca deserves real answers and actions from western environmental*. *Coachella Unincorporated*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2012/05/23/community-view-eduardo-guevara/>" <http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2012/05/23/community-view-eduardo-guevara/>

The author, Eduardo Guevara, asserts a general distrust of WEI's activities.

His main criticism is the lack of transparency in WEI's activities due to the fact that

they operate on sovereign land. Guevara believes WEI has “taken advantage of loopholes in legislation.”

Health Assessment Resource Center. (2010). *Eastern Riverside County Community Health Monitor, 2010*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.harcddata.org/UserFiles/File/2010_ERC_ExecReport_FINAL_032511.pdf" http://www.harcddata.org/UserFiles/File/2010_ERC_ExecReport_FINAL_032511.pdf

This data-driven report seeks to clearly delineate the true health status, behaviors, and needs of Eastern Riverside County residents with the aim of reducing disparities. The report looks into various health areas in detail, including adult as well as child health, community health concerns, health access, and an economic and environmental profile. The report provides detailed statistics of these areas.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca’s Misery, Chapter 1: Saul Martinez Elementary School. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240346/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Saul-Martinez-Elementary-School-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240346/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Saul-Martinez-Elementary-School-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

Five years after the opening of Saul Martinez Elementary School in 1998, Western began its operations two miles northwest of the school.

In December 2011, strong, foul odors prompted school officials to call the fire department, and evacuate 100 students on December 11th.

On December 15th, several students and faculty members became sick from the odor. Shortly after noon the school went on lockdown; fire crews speculated the odor was coming from the Western facility.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca’s Misery, Chapter 6: Smell returns after winter break. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240354/Mecca-smell-odor-returns-misery-school-winter-break-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240354/Mecca-smell-odor-returns-misery-school-winter-break-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

AQMD asked teachers and school faculty at Saul Martinez to take smell samples; the school principal was advised to buy a weather kit to record temperature, wind, barometric pressure and other conditions.

Some teachers have left Saul Martinez due to the odor conditions.

Honoré, M. (2012, May 17). Residents slam state's Mecca report. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120518/NEWS01/205180306/Residents-slam-state-s-Mecca-report?odyssey=tabtopnews|text|Frontpage>" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120518/NEWS01/205180306/Residents-slam-state-s-Mecca-report?odyssey=tabtopnews|text|Frontpage>

Some Mecca residents remain wary of WEI’s presence in the community even though a recent EPA DTSC report showed that soil taken from the facility came back as nonhazardous and no direct health impacts have been traced back to the facility. Several residents report several health problems, such as stomachaches and bodily pains, around the time WEI received record-numbers of waste into their facility.

DTSC has yet to test WEI soil samples for dioxins.

Kelly, D. (2008, January 15). U.S. judge may shut Duroville down. *Los Angeles Times*.

Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/15/local/me-duroville15>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/15/local/me-duroville15>

“The U.S. attorney's office asked [U.S. District Judge] Larson to close the park after reports from the Bureau of Indian Affairs identified numerous hazards such as jerry-built electrical systems, poor water quality, raw sewage on the ground, and trailers sitting too close together.”

Kelly, D. (2008, April 28). The poorest of the poor. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from

HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/28/local/me-purepecha28>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/28/local/me-purepecha28>

This article serves as an introduction to some the conditions the Purepecha live in, as well as background on how many Purepecha people reside in the ECV.

Kelly, D. (2009, April 24). Duroville testimony: haven or peril. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved

from HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/apr/24/local/me-duroville24>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/apr/24/local/me-duroville24>

Although residents face dangerous conditions in the Duroville trailer park, for some residents who immigrated from Michoacán, Mexico, the park is the only affordable option; many have children who are American citizens.

There are several corruption allegations surrounding Duroville management. Specifically, trailer park owner Harvey Duro, a member of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, admits to threatening residents who didn't pay rent on time, and was accused of asking a resident for sex in lieu of rent.

Kelly, D. (2009, May 1). Duroville mobile home park will not close. *Los Angeles Times*.

Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/01/local/me-duroville1>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/01/local/me-duroville1>

“After seven years of litigation, a federal judge Thursday refused to close the Duroville mobile home park, saying it would result in a "major humanitarian crisis" for thousands of poor farmworkers with no place else to go.”

Those pushing towards the park closing assert that brining the park to compliance would exceed \$4.3 million which park revenues would never cover.

“Plans for a new low-income trailer park in Riverside County came with questions about funding and whether illegal immigrants, who make up a large percentage of Duroville, were eligible.”

Kelly, D. (2009, October 8). Bringing healing to Duroville. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved

from HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/08/local/me-duroville-doctor8>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/oct/08/local/me-duroville-doctor8>

Dr. Alberto Maneta, a UC Irvine medical professor, brought about a dozen student volunteers to the Duroville community in order to educate his medical students about local poverty.

The students provided free medical screenings for the residents, many of which were suffering from untreated high blood pressure, infections, and diabetes.

Kelly, D. (2010, June 5). Illegal trailer park grows into a community. *Los Angeles Times*.

Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/05/local/la-me-duroville-20100605>" <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/05/local/la-me-duroville-20100605>

A year after a federal judge rejected government efforts to shut down Duroville, the trailer community has seen several organizational improvements, such as elected councils and 11 block captains.

Several have come to the aid of the community, including Arturo Rodriguez, directing attorney for California Rural Legal Assistance, Father Howard Lincoln, pastor at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Palm Desert, and Dr. Alberto Manetta, professor of medicine at UC Irvine.

Mines, R., S. Nichols, and D. Runsten. (2010). California's Indigenous Farmworkers: Final Report of the Indigenous Farmworker Study (IFS). *Indigenous Farmworker Study*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org/IFS%20Full%20Report%20_Jan2010.pdf" http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org/IFS%20Full%20Report%20_Jan2010.pdf

The study found that indigenous peoples of Mexico are younger, poorer as opposed to mestizos Mexicans; provides various reasons as to why this is the case, including that indigenous people are the most recent group of Mexicans to migrate to California. Intends to provide guidance for policy and program design related to the indigenous community.

The study is divided into eight different sections, including working conditions, housing, and health concerns. Statistics and various charts give a detailed view of areas of concern. The data collected can also be found on the Indigenous Mexicans in California Agriculture website, HYPERLINK "http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org/mx_localities12.shtml" <http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org>; the website gives an interactive map of Mexico's indigenous population and the California regions they frequently migrate to.

Quintana Leader, C. (Director and Producer). (2000). Poorest of the Poor. [Motion Picture]. (Available from HYPERLINK "http://www.indivision2000.com/purepecha_synopsis.html" http://www.indivision2000.com/purepecha_synopsis.html)

Documentary focuses on the day-to-day conditions of the Purepecha residents of the ECV, with commentary from local caregivers that work directly with the affected population.

A video summary of the movie can be found at HYPERLINK "<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNIXqHaxWVE&feature=fvwr>" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNIXqHaxWVE&feature=fvwr>

Sandoval, E. (2010, December 15). Strange Smell Sends Two Elementary School Staff Members to Hospital. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.kesq.com/news/26146241/detail.html>" <http://www.kesq.com/news/26146241/detail.html>

This news report was released the day several students and staff at Saul Martinez Elementary became ill from foul odors.

Two adults went to the hospital with respiratory problems. Ten other adults and children reported having breathing problems.

School was in session the following day.

Social Compact. (2010). *Coachella: Grocery Gap*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.cafreshworks.com/system/pdfs/resources/>

Grocery_Gap_Reports_for_Building_Healthy_Communities_Sites/
GroceryGap_Report_Coachella_Final.pdf" [http://www.cafreshworks.com/system/pdfs/
resources/Grocery_Gap_Reports_for_Building_Healthy_Communities_Sites/
GroceryGap_Report_Coachella_Final.pdf](http://www.cafreshworks.com/system/pdfs/resources/Grocery_Gap_Reports_for_Building_Healthy_Communities_Sites/GroceryGap_Report_Coachella_Final.pdf)

Describes the food availability for Coachella residents in terms of distance to grocery stores and stores' capacity. The study concludes that 28% of the population in Coachella is considered underserved.

Yeung, B. (2012, April 6). Neglect, health concerns envelope poor county areas in California. *California Watch*. Retrieved HYPERLINK "http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/06/4394901/neglect-health-concerns-envelope.html" <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/06/4394901/neglect-health-concerns-envelope.html>

Many unincorporated communities began springing-up between the 1940's and 1950's, bringing together migrants from the Deep South, the Dust Bowl, Mexico, and Central America.

"Money and jurisdiction often stand in the way of progress." Local cities often find themselves financially responsible for improving conditions in nearby unincorporated communities. In cases of septic tank management, homeowners are responsible for the costs which can prove to be a major cost for families whose median income falls extremely short of the state median.

The U.S. Census Bureau has incomplete, limited data on unincorporated communities, which often don't provide a complete portrayal of living conditions. Governor Jerry Brown signed into law legislation which requires government officials to consider neighboring low-income unincorporated areas in general city planning; legislation also gives these areas the legal name of "disadvantaged unincorporated communities."

Yeung, B. (2011, December 22). Residents of Coachella Valley suffer high rates of sickness. *California Watch*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/residents-coachella-valley-suffer-high-rates-sickness-14213#.Twvtvd_5u3M.gmail" http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/residents-coachella-valley-suffer-high-rates-sickness-14213#.Twvtvd_5u3M.gmail

This article summarizes some of the findings from a health report released by the Palm Desert-based Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC), which began gathering health and socioeconomic data for eastern Riverside County in 2007.

HEALTH

California Air Resources Board. (2007). *The Health Impacts of Coarse Particulate Matter* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/access/content/group/e10bdaad-731b-4489-89af-650e4f626bd6/Reports/arb%20ECV.pdf" [https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/access/content/group/
e10bdaad-731b-4489-89af-650e4f626bd6/Reports/arb%20ECV.pdf](https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/access/content/group/e10bdaad-731b-4489-89af-650e4f626bd6/Reports/arb%20ECV.pdf)

Concerns the adverse consequences of coarse air pollution (e.i. PM 10) and heart rate variability. These consequences were stronger in desert regions, due to the deserts unique particle composition in desert regions.

Studies found increase in cardiovascular and total death related to coarse particles.

Presentation refers to Dr. Michael J. Lipsett's study on Coachella Valley senior residents with heart disease; he found short-term exposure to coarse particles can be hazardous to public health.

The California Endowment. (2011). Eastern Coachella Valley: Health Profile [Fact sheet]. *Building Healthy Communities*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/CoachellaDescrip.html" <http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/CoachellaDescrip.html>

The information on the fact sheet is derived from the California Health Interview Survey. It describes the health of adults, teens, and children living in Eastern Coachella Valley, one of the 14 BHC sites. It provides a snapshot of key survey findings prior to implementing the BHC plan and can be used to mobilize friends and neighbors, advocate for community change, secure greater resources, and guide community planning.

California State Democratic Caucus. (2012). *Assembly Member V. Manuel Perez, Mecca Health and Safety*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.asmdc.org/members/a80/mecca?layout=item" <http://www.asmdc.org/members/a80/mecca?layout=item>

On his website, Assembly Member Perez lists several letters, videos, press releases, and articles, documenting his activities surrounding health and environmental safety in Mecca.

The material listed generally regards the incident at Saul Martinez Elementary; it documents the experiences of the people affected, as well as his efforts to resolve odor concerns.

Coachella Valley residents less healthy than California peers. (2011, December 20). *The Public Record*, pp. 10. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.harcddata.org/UserFiles/File/CV%20Residents%20Less%20Healthy%20than%20CA%20Peers%2012-27-2011.pdf" <http://www.harcddata.org/UserFiles/File/CV%20Residents%20Less%20Healthy%20than%20CA%20Peers%2012-27-2011.pdf>

This article summarizes some of the findings from a health report released by the Palm Desert-based Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC). The report asserts that 17.4% of Coachella Valley residents consider themselves to have fair or poor health, double the state proportion of 8.1%.

Osborn, S.N. (2011). Eastern Riverside County Community Health Monitor Executive Summary for Children 0 to 5 and 6 to 17 for First 5 Riverside. *Health Assessment Resource Center*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.harcddata.org/pdfs/ExecutiveSummaryforChildren05and617SpecialReport132012.pdf" <http://www.harcddata.org/pdfs/ExecutiveSummaryforChildren05and617SpecialReport132012.pdf>

This summary looks at data from the 2012 Community Health Monitor report on children 0-5 and 6-17 for Riverside County; areas surveyed include Coachella, India, Mecca/North Shore, and Thermal, among others.

Topics covered include: health access, health optimization, oral health, mental health, asthma, nutrition, and physical activity.

HOUSING

Villarejo, D., Schenker, M., Moss Joyner, A., and Parnell, A. (2012). *(Unsafe) At Home. The Health Consequences of Sub-Standard Farm Labor Housing*. California Rural Legal Assistance. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.crla.org/unsafe-home-health-consequences-sub-standard-farm-labor-housing>" <http://www.crla.org/unsafe-home-health-consequences-sub-standard-farm-labor-housing>

This is a review report on national and/or local research findings concerning associations between farm labor housing conditions and adverse health outcomes.

Villarejo, D. & Schenker, M. (2006). *Environmental Health Policy and California's Farm Labor Housing*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://agcenter.ucdavis.edu/Announce/Documents/Env_Health_Pol.pdf" http://agcenter.ucdavis.edu/Announce/Documents/Env_Health_Pol.pdf

The report looks at data from the California Agricultural Worker Health Survey (CAWHS), looking at the increase in migrant workers in several regions throughout California, including Mecca, a city in the Coachella Valley, and the housing conditions in each area. Conditions are assessed by the type of dwelling workers reside in, occupants per dwelling, median income, and rental rate.

The report calls for more uniform standards in addressing housing health in the state of California. At the end of the report 9 policy recommendations are given which highlight the need for research and government intervention.

ECONOMIC

Honoré. M. (2012, March 25). Proud, self-reliant Mecca 'a very unified community.' *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240350/Proud-self-reliant-Mecca-very-united-community->" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240350/Proud-self-reliant-Mecca-very-united-community->

Mecca has seen a recent population growth as well as civic improvements, such as "new sidewalks, a Boys & Girls Club, a new public library, a health clinic and a sheriff's station."

The city is inhabited by 8,500 residents; the median household income is \$26,200 (state is \$60,883).

Mecca was the first stop on the old Bradshaw Trail, which was the first road to connect Riverside County to the Colorado River.

Many residents trace their family roots in the city back to the 1950's; many Mexican residents came to California as a part of the Bracero Program.

Hard to Count Census Tracts- Families Below Poverty Level: Riverside County Supervisorial District 4 [Topological map]. (2009). Retrieved from The California Endowment.

The map illustrates census tracts with families below poverty level in the county and also provides four detail maps of denser populated areas, like Indio and Mecca.

LAND USE

Brambila, N.C. (2008, January 15). Judge issues ultimatum to 'Duroville.' *The Desert Sun*.

"A federal judge Monday told the owner of a ramshackle mobile home park in Thermal to comply with court orders or face U.S. marshals who will shutter the park."

ECV-IVAN. (2011). *East Coachella Valley IVAN Reports*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK

"<http://ivan-coachella.org/reports/>" <http://ivan-coachella.org/reports/>

The website has documented reports of the odor pestilence coming from WEI and cites the incidence as a verified report.

IVAN aims to protect the environment and well-being of ECV residents; it encourages community member to report environmental problems and environmental damage.

It is sponsored by Comite Civico Del Valle, Inc., Cal EPA State Water Resources Control Board, The California Endowment, and Z Data Solutions LLC.

Mapping includes search function by date and category of environmental hazard (e.g. abandoned/ illegal dumping, etc.).

Healthy City. (2009). Coachella [Topographical map]. *The California Endowment*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/pdfs/Coachella_111011.pdf"

http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/pdfs/Coachella_111011.pdf

A map of the Coachella region that includes roads, streets, parks and the Salton Sea. It also outlines Thermal and Mecca on the map.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca's Misery, Chapter 2: Cabazon Band of Mission

Indians. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240347/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Western-Environmental-operation-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>"

<http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240347/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-Western-Environmental-operation-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

The tribe and its chairman, David Roosevelt, report being taken off-guard by the community's accusations regarding the tribe's waste treatment facility and its practices.

Roosevelt is not convinced Western was the source of the odors after the tribe shut down the plant's soy-whey and oil-separation ponds in February 2011.

An east valley environmental justice task force invited the tribe to attend its monthly meetings, but Roosevelt declined.

Roosevelt wants the public to know the tribe does not seek to hide behind its

sovereignty.

The tribe employs three members for its environmental department, which Roosevelt considers is sufficient.

In 2005, the tribe had just wrapped up a \$145 million Fantasy Springs expansion, but the casino wasn't making the money needed to support operations; at least 40 employees were laid off. Some speculate this event might have detracted attention to environmental regulations at the waste treatment plant, although Roosevelt said that at the time "there was no reason to think anything was amiss at the recovery park."

Honoré, M. (2011, November 29). Re: Health hazards similar in San Joaquin, Coachella valleys [article by Desert Sun reporter]. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "<http://sjvleap.wordpress.com/2011/11/29/health-hazards-similar-in-san-joaquin-coachella-valleys/>" <http://sjvleap.wordpress.com/2011/11/29/health-hazards-similar-in-san-joaquin-coachella-valleys/>

Blog post in SJV Leap highlights the "Land of Risk/ Land of Opportunity" report on environmental and health risks in the San Joaquin Valley; states conditions are similar in the eastern Coachella Valley (e.g. polluted water, toxic air).

States no comparable report exists for the eastern Coachella Valley.

Academic involvement in region: Ryan Sinclair (Assistant Professor of Environmental Health, Loma Linda University) maps mobile home parks and "health threats from wastewater that isn't properly disposed"; team of students is assisting him with project; intends to finish project when he receives more funding. His report can be found on the IVAN mapping website: HYPERLINK "<http://www.ivanonline.org/>" <http://www.ivanonline.org/>

Madrigal, A. (2008). *Sovereignty, Land & Water: Building tribal environmental and cultural programs on the Cahuilla & Twenty-Nine Palms Reservations*. Riverside, CA: California Center for Native Nations.

McGovern, D. (1995). *The Campo Indian landfill war: The fight for gold in California's garbage*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

McGovern concludes that as long as there is revenue to be earned from the construction of waste management facilities on Indian reservations, and as long as regulation standards remain ambiguous for Indian land, tribes will continue to find value in entering into agreements.

McGovern describes the tribes as "vulnerable" to exploitation by waste management companies, with the benefits of the partnership favoring non-Indians, especially when considering the sites would be largely handling non-Indian-generated waste.

Tribes often lack the resources to adequately evaluate the financial, legal, and technical aspects of proposals, as well as the resources to establish and operate a system to meet certain standards. The Campo case is unique in that it established a model other tribes can use, by requiring the developer to subsidize the tribe's expenses in assessing the proposal and developing a regulatory program (McGovern 251).

The complexity of the issue lies in the effect of constructing the management facility or not. By constructing the facility, nearby communities face the risk of landfill leakage which could contaminate the nearby aquifer. On the other hand, the revenue generated by the facility would provide the Campos tribe an escape from poverty (McGovern 255).

Frequently asked questions about the Campo Landfill can be found at [HYPERLINK "http://www.campo-nsn.gov/campolandfill.html"](http://www.campo-nsn.gov/campolandfill.html) <http://www.campo-nsn.gov/campolandfill.html>

Medina, Jennifer. (2012, May 27). Budget crisis takes toll on community for California farmworkers. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [HYPERLINK "http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/28/us/california-farmworkers-community-hurt-by-budget-crisis.html?_r=2"](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/28/us/california-farmworkers-community-hurt-by-budget-crisis.html?_r=2) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/28/us/california-farmworkers-community-hurt-by-budget-crisis.html?_r=2

In 2009, a federal judge asserted that conditions in the Duroville trailer park were unsuitable for residents; he ruled that residents had to be relocated to a replacement affordable housing unit.

Riverside County planned on using redevelopment funds, from both federal and state money, to “entice a new builder to create a mobile-home development.” However, Governor Brown shut down redevelopment agencies and state money can only be given for existing contracts.

Residents affirm that conditions have improved since the court ruling; no new residents have been allowed to move into the park so many trailers have been abandoned.

40 homes have been built and are almost ready for new residents. 120 remain delayed as they wait for state approval.

Middleton, B. R. (2011). *Trust in the land: New directions in tribal conservation*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Saldivar, A. (2012, May 4). Children Lay Foundation for Community Garden at Mecca Trailer Park. *Coachella Unincorporated*. Retrieved from [HYPERLINK "http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2012/05/04/children-lay-foundation-for-community-garden/"](http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2012/05/04/children-lay-foundation-for-community-garden/) <http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2012/05/04/children-lay-foundation-for-community-garden/>

Kounkuey Design Initiative and Pueblo Unido Community Development Corporation are collaborating on a community garden project in Mecca’s St. Anthony’s Trailer Park. KDI details the project on their website http://www.kounkuey.org/SA_PPS.html#

KDI has partnered with the University of California, Davis extension program in Riverside County to provide Nutrition Education classes to residents.

The project aims to provide residents with a safe recreation area for adults and children, engage local youth as community leaders, and provide healthy good options through garden crops.

Saldivar, A. (2011, November 17). Private School = Public Transportation Headache for Thermal Student. *Coachella Unincorporated*. Retrieved from [HYPERLINK "http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2011/11/17/private-school-public-transportation-headache-for-thermal-student"](http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2011/11/17/private-school-public-transportation-headache-for-thermal-student) <http://coachellaunincorporated.org/2011/11/17/private-school-public-transportation-headache-for-thermal-student>

This article presents the personal account of a young Thermal resident and her struggles with public transportation to and from her private school in Palm Desert. The author asserts that there are too few transit stops in the East Valley, and that she would require private means of transportation to and from the nearest bus stop; the

nearest bus stop from her home was an hour away on foot.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Center for Regional Change, University of California Davis. (2008). *California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP)*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/projects/california-civic-engagement-project-ccep" <http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/projects/california-civic-engagement-project-ccep>

The California Civic Engagement Project looks at civic engagement by gathering voter registration and voter turnout data from various sources, and categorizes that data by region and population. The project pays particular attention to Latino and Asian populations because of the limited quality and quantity of publicly available civic engagement data on these two subgroups.

The website presents this information, taken from the 2008 General Election, in two forms: data tables and GIS maps. Both of these forms subdivide the data by geographic regions, counties, and cities as well as by age, political affiliation, race, and gender of the population.

Film Inquiry Research and Media Education (FIRME) Productions. (2012). Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.firmeproductions.com/index.php?pageId=9" <http://www.firmeproductions.com/index.php?pageId=9>

FIRME aims to engage high school youth in using video media as a means to express themselves and bring about social change.

One student film, "The Contaminated Valley" (2007) details pollution problems facing the community of Thermal through the eyes of the residents. It was recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency and won best film in the 2006 Palm Springs Student Film Festival. The film can be viewed at HYPERLINK "http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DpKGIFh-2g" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DpKGIFh-2g>.

Honoré, M. (2012, March 25). Mecca's Misery, Chapter 7: EPA, other agencies step in. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240355/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-EPA-intervention-DTSC-AQMD-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120325/NEWS07/203240355/Mecca-smell-odor-misery-EPA-intervention-DTSC-AQMD-Desert-Sun-investigation-iSun>

"On May 6 2011, after a series of reports in The Desert Sun describing the turmoil in Mecca, U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer wrote a blunt letter to the EPA demanding that the agency act urgently to find and stop the source of the odor. This was followed by a visit by Boxer and Erin Brockovich to Saul Martinez Elementary."

The DTSC review could either cause Western to meet new standards, but if the cost of making changes proves to be too high, the company could chose to either close production, or continue to operate.

Despite the hope the report could bring, residents feel the problem will not be

resolved until the plant completely halts production.

Honoré, M. (2011, August 18). Activist Erin Brockovich, Sen. Barbara Boxer praise Mecca students for raising red flags on odor. *The Desert Sun*. Retrieved from HYPERLINK "http://www.mydesert.com/article/20110819/NEWS07/110818019/Activist-Erin-Brockovich-Sen-Barbara-Boxer-praise-Mecca-students-raising-red-flags-odor" <http://www.mydesert.com/article/20110819/NEWS07/110818019/Activist-Erin-Brockovich-Sen-Barbara-Boxer-praise-Mecca-students-raising-red-flags-odor>

Boxer met privately with teachers, administrators, as well as state and federal officials at Saul Martinez Elementary School. It was an opportunity for the senator to praise the EPA after the Republicans called the agency a “meddlesome bureaucracy.” Boxer also praised the students for raising red flags on the issue.