

Case Study: Los Angeles' Clean Up Green Up Ordinance



Why LA Planned for Environmental Justice

The City of Los Angeles adopted the first ever “Clean Up Green Up” (CUGU) Ordinance to reduce public exposure to pollutant emissions and other unhealthy environmental impacts in three “toxic hotspots” neighborhoods: Pacoima/Sun Valley, Boyle Heights, and Wilmington.

CalEnviroScreen identifies all three neighborhoods in the top 5% of communities in California with the highest pollution burdens and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Compared to other areas in Los Angeles, the three communities have higher rates of asthma, cancer, obesity, and cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and more pedestrian and cyclist injuries or deaths.

Community Engagement Process

Community engagement was led by the LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice, a grassroots group comprised of members from pollution-burdened neighborhoods that formed in 2006 to combat the issue of citywide industrial pollution. A community-based ground-truthing process was a key component of the CUGU campaign. Community members engaged in the following activities with university researchers and the Liberty Hill Foundation:

- Verified the locations of air toxic facilities listed by the State.
- Monitored air quality and identified facilities believed to be toxic.
- Identified additional sensitive land uses, such as family-based daycare centers.

- Informed neighbors about the planning process.
- Defined industries of concern that needed to be included in the policy.
- Identified industrial classifications believed to be the most harmful.
- Visited neighborhoods to compare similarities and differences among communities.

Next, the city conducted a series of public workshops in partnership with community-based organizations, who worked to ensure broad attendance at each workshop.

Outcome

On April 22, 2016, Mayor Garcetti signed the CUGU Ordinance into law with unanimous support from the LA City Council. The ordinance establishes new development standards to govern many new and/or expanded industries in each community, such as:

- Proper building and mechanical enclosures to prevent fugitive emissions.
- “No Idling” signage for diesel trucks at warehouses and other industrial facilities.
- “Buffer zones” setbacks of 500 feet between auto-related uses and residences.
- Improved site planning such as proper trash enclosures and materials storage.
- Provisions for complying with noise standards and proper mitigations.

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)

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Full toolkit: <https://caleja.org/2017/09/sb-1000-toolkit-release/>



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- Signage on municipal buildings within 1,000 feet of freeways warning of health hazards due to vehicle exhaust and particulate matter.

The ordinance also established new requirements such as:

- The installation of high-grade air filters for all residential and commercial development within 1,000 feet of a freeway.
- A conditional use permit for construction of new or expanding oil refineries.
- The submission of a health impact assessment and a truck routing plan.

In addition, the ordinance created an ombudsman position to support local businesses with navigating the permitting process and to help them comply with regulatory standards.

The ordinance also created plans to attract new investment in communities that would promote environmental health, such as electric vehicle infrastructure and urban greening.

Key Lessons

The following achievements and challenges can be elicited from the CUGU planning process:

- The LA Collaborative’s community-driven process illustrated how broad-based and inclusive engagement is possible when there is financial support.
- Educating the community about environmental health topics helps facilitate meaningful engagement.
- Community-based organizations working with members who live in the most impacted areas are highly effective in recruiting other residents into the planning process.
- Strengthening connections among diverse neighborhoods helped develop leaders in the campaign.
- Opposition to the ordinance caused a number of community resident recommendations to not be included in the final ordinance.

Case Study Summary: Los Angeles

Location	Los Angeles
Community Type	Urban
Population Size	3,792,621
Geographic Area	502.76 sq. mi.
EJ Issue(s) Addressed	Air quality
Community Engagement Process	City Council, community-based organizations
Community-Based Organization Actively Engaged	LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice
Outcome	City ordinance
Adopted	April 2016

