

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 30, 2003

Contact: Dr. Joseph Lyou
(310) 536-8237 or jlyou@EnviroRights.org

Environmental Justice Recommendations Report Approved

OAKLAND – California’s communities of color and low-income residents celebrated today as the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) Advisory Committee on Environmental Justice approved a precedent-setting and long-awaited recommendations report. The report includes comprehensive recommendations addressing a broad range of community concerns about public participation in agency decisions, cumulative environmental impacts, and the need for Cal/EPA to take precautionary action to prevent pollution and protect public health.

Cal/EPA Secretary Winston Hickox, who attended the 2-day meeting of the advisory committee, embraced the recommendations as an important environmental justice accomplishment and thanked committee members for their 18-month effort in developing the report. “We have identified a path for California to achieve environmental justice,” said Dr. Joseph Lyou, Executive Director of the California Environmental Rights Alliance and a member of the committee. “This report should bring hope to those fighting for clean air, land, and water in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods,” said Dr. Lyou.

California law defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Most environmental justice advocates endorse a broader definition that focuses on communities of color and low-income neighborhoods and incorporates the principles of civil rights and environmental protection.

The advisory committee directed Cal/EPA staff to incorporate changes in the report approved today and convey the final document to Secretary Hickox no later than tomorrow. Secretary Hickox has promised that Cal/EPA will move quickly to consider the formal adoption and implementation of the advisory committee’s recommendations.

The Cal/EPA Advisory Committee on Environmental Justice includes a broad range of stakeholders from environmental and community organizations, large and small California businesses, and local government and environmental regulatory officials. (See www.calepa.ca.gov/EnvJustice/Committee/ for a list of committee members.)

#

California Environmental Rights Alliance

P.O. Box 116 • El Segundo, CA, 90245-0116 • (310) 536-8237 (office) • (309) 420-4212 (fax)
info@EnviroRights.org • www.EnviroRights.org
a project of Community Partners®