



People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights

April 15, 2008

Jack Fleck
City Traffic Engineer
1 South Van Ness, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

We are writing this letter on behalf of *iPODER!* to request your immediate attention to the health impacts of truck traffic in the communities throughout South East San Francisco. *iPODER!* is a community based environmental justice organization based in the Mission & Excelsior neighborhoods and we organize together with Latino immigrant families for our land, our immigrants rights, and our community's health.

iPODER! has been working with community members, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, UC Berkeley, the Chinese Progressive Association, and GreenAction for Environmental Health and Justice to gather information about the health impacts of concentrated traffic pollution in South East San Francisco. We have focused in particular on the Still / Lyell freeway channel in the Excelsior District. This community, like much of South East San Francisco, is a working class community, made up of many immigrants and people of color, and is home to many children, youth, families, and elders.

We have counted traffic on street corners, interviewed our neighbors, taken pictures of our neighborhood, and tested our air and want to share with you some key findings that have been raised by community members and leaders in the neighborhood.

- ☆ *Over 46% of residents said they smelled traffic pollution on their block in the last week*
- ☆ *In a typical one-hour commute period, over 107 medium and big trucks pass through the residential community of the Still and Lyell traffic channel. That means 10% of overall traffic comes from bigger vehicles that are diesel polluters*
- ☆ *Pollution from diesel vehicles in the area pose a health risk to nearby families at two times the levels established by the Department of Public Health to trigger action or mitigation, which is .2 ug / m³ of Particulate Matter 2.5*
- ☆ *The health impacts to Excelsior residents can result in ~160 days per year with respiratory symptoms, 108 days with work limitations, and 577 days with minor activity limitations*
- ☆ *Health impacts from exposure to pollution correlate with the top killers in our community, including lung problems, heart conditions, and cancer, all of which are affected by exposure to pollution in our environment*



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- ☆ *The Excelsior District had the highest overall number of people hospitalized for asthma for three years in a row*
- ☆ *46% of residents stated that reducing truck traffic in their neighborhood would improve their community's health a lot*

Our community is very concerned because this diesel pollution happens next to people's homes, schools, and neighborhood parks. Children are the most vulnerable to these health impacts and close to half of all households in the Excelsior District are families with children. We believe that the impacts from truck traffic we have identified in the Still / Lyell freeway channel are symptomatic of trends throughout the South East neighborhoods that are located in the shadow of the freeway. In the neighborhoods in and around the 101 freeway, our community allies the *Chinese Progressive Association*, have been gathering information about similar health impacts from truck traffic. Similarly, *GreenAction for Environmental Health & Justice* has been working to educate truck drivers about the health impacts from diesel pollution.

When we contacted the Department of Parking and Traffic and spoke to Ricardo Olea, we learned that the city does very little to monitor truck traffic, trucking impacts, or health impacts that arise from truck traffic. We understand the important role that trucks play in transporting goods and services and supporting our light industrial and commercial industries and providing job opportunities; however, we believe truck traffic needs to be regulated by the city to move through corridors that are most appropriate and minimize the health risks and impacts to the community.

We are asking for an immediate study to monitor trucking impacts to the community in the Still & Lyell traffic channel and throughout similar traffic channels in South East San Francisco. We are also asking for a community planning process to determine appropriate trucking routes, vehicle weight restricts, and long term commercial industrial zoning that can facilitate the flow of truck traffic while minimizing the health impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

We would appreciate a meeting with you to address these concerns and invite you to come to PODER to meet with our members and develop solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,

Charlie Sciammas for PODER

Cc Nathaniel Ford, Sr, Executive Director
MTA Board of Directors
Board of Supervisors
Office of the Mayor