EHC, Shipyard Union Workers Hold Press Conference to Urge City Council to Take Barrio Logan Referendum to Ballot

For the third time, City Council votes in favor of community-approved plan

SAN DIEGO, December 17, 2013 – Today, San Diego City Council again voted in favor of the community-approved Barrio Logan Community Plan, pushing it to a citywide vote on the June ballot. Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), an organization that fights toxic pollution, celebrates City Council for not giving into industry lies and standing strong in their vote to uphold the new, community-developed plan for one San Diego neighborhood that needs it most -- Barrio Logan.

With today's vote, the majority of the San Diego City Council again denied an expensive citywide signature gathering campaign fully funded by false claims made by out-of-state corporations and their deep pockets.

"The people of San Diego elected our City Council members to lead our city, yet these greedy corporations think they can use their money to overturn City Council votes," said Georgette Gomez, associate director at EHC. "We thank the City Council for protecting democracy and the financial investment they made in the five-year community planning process that led to today's Barrio Logan Plan." By funding two signature-gathering campaigns to create today's referendum, the shipbuilding industry will cost taxpayers approximately an additional $500,000 to put the vote onto June's ballot. This additional cost to the city comes on top of the approximately $3 million that the City invested in the five-year planning process that allowed for input from community members and industry spokespeople alike. "It is unfortunate, for the residents of Barrio Logan and the citizens of San Diego, that big corporate interest have chosen to take democracy into their own hands," said Susan Riggs, executive director for San Diego Housing Federation. "After a lengthy and thorough process, in which significant concessions were made, these interests have chosen to pay signature gatherers to push the issue to the ballot, costing San Diego taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, rather than supporting a plan that will ensure a healthier future for Barrio Logan's current and future residents."

If passed in June, the new plan will shape the future of Barrio Logan by finally separating industrial operations from residential neighborhoods in the interest of breathable air, affordable community housing and support for the maritime workforce. According to the official environmental impact report, zero jobs will be lost as a result – in fact, the community will see a 47 percent increase in local job opportunities.
Barrio Logan's newly approved community plan designates a heavy industrial zone away from homes and schools. With this clear separation of industrial and residential zones, along with a buffer zone that incorporates office buildings and parking structures, Barrio Logan can finally regain a safe place to live, work and play.

Previously, Barrio Logan's community plan had no land-use zoning, which allowed for polluting industries to operate next door to homes and schools. Once a thriving neighborhood of San Diego, over the years Barrio Logan became a neighborhood of unhealthy incompatible land uses, which results in three times the asthma hospitalization rate of the rest of San Diego.

For more information on Environmental Health Coalition and its efforts in Barrio Logan, please visit www.environmentalhealth.org.

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