



CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

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The Central California Environmental Justice Network will host its 4th CCEJN Conference on Saturday May 20, 2006.

“This year’s conference will feature a case study of Valley communities that rank among the poorest in the State of California, that face severe environmental problems, and that have a high population of people of color and ag-worker immigrants” said CCEJN President Vianey Nuñez. “The communities that will be featured have limited political power yet are strongly organizing toward solutions and increased representation. By featuring this case study of Environmental Justice communities, the conference will demonstrate how residents can indeed create a healthier Central Valley”.

The San Joaquin Valley has been one of the most important regions in the environmental justice movement. Campaigns in Kettleman City (toxic waste incinerator) and the United Farm Workers’ Valley-wide campaign on pesticides have gained worldwide attention and are important models for the fast-growing EJ movement.

The Environmental Justice Movement is decades old and is based on the fact that environmental burdens are not spread evenly across communities but concentrated in areas where there is a high population of poor people, especially poor people of color.

“Communities whose residents have little formal education, whose principal language might not be English, and which might have a large number of non-citizens are targeted for toxic facilities like incinerators, dumps, power plants, mega-dairies and prisons because it is expected that they won’t be able to fight back,” said Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Chair of American and Ethnic Studies at University of Southern California. “But decades of environmental justice activism has shown that communities fight to protect themselves. This conference is fortunate to have such wonderful activists to participate in a movement to have a healthier Central Valley.”

Workshops will be offered on air quality, on the impacts of poor pesticide regulations, and on the community’s legal right to get involved in water issues, to name a few. Special sessions for the Youth will focus on Environmental Justice concerns with the prevalence of the Prison Industrial Complex in the Central Valley.

The conference is FREE. Childcare and translation services will be provided upon request. FREE continental breakfast and FREE lunch. The conference location will be at the First Congregational Church “The Big Red Church” at 2231 N. Van Ness in Fresno. Registration and continental breakfast will begin at 8:00 a.m. The conference begins at 9:00 a.m. and will run until 4:00 pm.

For more information and to pre-register contact Conference Coordinator; Debbie Reyes at 559-916-4370 / reyesdm@pacbell.net. You can also contact CCEJN President, Vianey Nunez at 559 790 4691/vianeyedithza@csufresno.edu