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Press Release

2012 Environmental Justice Tour Marks a First for Oregon

A bus tour into the heart of our community to include local leaders

Eugene, OR 3/9/2012: (Eugene, OR) For the first time in Oregon’s history, Beyond Toxics and Centro LatinoAmericano will be hosting a bus tour into West Eugene’s Industrial Corridor neighborhoods to raise awareness about environmental justice issues the people who live there face every day.

According to the US EPA, fifty air and toxic release sites and two Superfund sites are listed within the nine square mile area of West Eugene. Industrial sites and transportation routes are sources of over 206,000 pounds of onsite toxic chemical releases that can negatively impact health (Source: USEPA Toxics Release Inventory - 2010). Residents who live in Bethel, Trainsong and River Road neighborhoods face more frequent and intense exposures.

How can our community respond? What solutions can we offer? The planned bus tour in April will be guided by environmental justice leaders and community members and will visit multiple sites in each residential neighborhood where environmental hazards are suspected. Following the tour, community residents and government and representative from federal and state agencies will gather at the Petersen Barn Community Center. Here area residents will have a chance to tell their particular stories of exposure and health concerns and all will have an opportunity for dialogue to address multiple issues, including responsiveness, accountability, human and environmental rights and transparency in West Eugene.

The concept of an Environmental Justice Community Tour, or “Toxics Tour,” has been widely used throughout the nation as a grassroots community tool to engage residents and major decision-makers in addressing social and environmental justice issues.

As Lisa Jackson, the Administrator to the US Environmental Protection Agency, stated “...We must be sensitive to the burdens pollution has placed on vulnerable subpopulations, including children, the elderly, the poor and all others who are at particular risk to threats to health and the environment. We must seek their full partnership in the greater aim of identifying and eliminating the sources of pollution in their neighborhoods, schools, and homes.”

We hope you will make a commitment to join us on this tour of West Eugene industrial sites and become part of a wider environmental justice community effort in the West Eugene area.

To attend, or for scheduling information, please contact our Environmental Justice Outreach Coordinator, Alison Guzman, aguzman@beyondtoxics.org or 541.465.8860.