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<http://www.beyondtoxics.org/resources/press-kit/>



## **For Immediate Release – March 23, 2022**

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### **Eugene City Councilors to Host Forum on Pollution**

*Councilors will Discuss 3 Proposals to Tackle Chronic Polluters Following Closure of JH Baxter Plant*

**Eugene, OR.** – In order to address growing concerns about public health and industrial pollution, City Councilors Claire Syrett and Randy Groves will speak at a Community Public Forum on Tuesday, March 29th at 7 p.m. Participants will discuss three proposals that have received unanimous support from the Eugene City Council. The purpose of all three of these proposals is to reduce local industrial pollution and improve public health for the entire community.

*"I am very concerned about the release of toxins in our environment and their effect on our health, safety, welfare and the environment. The J.H. Baxter dioxin contamination is just one example of outcomes we must avoid in the future,"* says Eugene City Councilor Randy Groves.

Councilors Syrett and Groves have organized this forum to elicit community feedback on the following proposals:

- Requiring risk bonds or liability insurance for industrial users of fossil fuel or hazardous chemicals.
- A public health overlay zone.
- Chronic toxic polluter solutions.

A Public Health Overlay Zone is an additional land use zoning code that applies to established residential neighborhoods and industrial zones. These types of zones are designed to ensure that future land development projects promote a healthy environment and improved quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods. The City of Eugene adopted a similar land use concept in 2017 when it annexed lands to add acres for industrial and manufacturing jobs in the Clear Lake Road area in West Eugene.

Risk Bonds are *used to ensure financial responsibility for the impacts of future releases on surrounding neighborhoods and public infrastructure.*

*City councilors also agreed to ask the staff to determine how a local government could implement meaningful solutions to address chronic toxic polluters.*

The Community Public Forum has enlisted several local experts on the topics slated for discussion, including:

- Dr. Lisandra Guzman, Deputy Public Health Officer, Lane County Public Health
- Laura Allen, Member, Eugene Sustainability Commission
- Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics

*"To better address these issues Councilor Syrett and I pushed for three council work sessions," said Councilor Groves. "We must explore tools and strategies for addressing chronic toxic polluters."* Councilors are eager to receive questions and ideas from the community during the public forum.

The Community Public Forum is sponsored by Beyond Toxics, and will be held virtually on Zoom on Tuesday, March 29th at 7-8:30 p.m. Those who wish to join the event can pre-register: (<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqc-qqrT8vGNVethdNtdH9I5pjylEfihb3>)

For more details, see our webpage: <https://www.beyondtoxics.org/work/environmental-justice/the-public-health-overlay-zone/>

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Beyond Toxics provides leadership to build a community-driven environmental justice movement for a thriving and just Oregon. We envision a society where everyone has equitable access to healthy food and clean air and water, and underserved communities are included in decision making processes that affect them. Together, we move beyond the damaging environmental practices of the past and collectively work to support and maintain ecological resilience and balance.