

JUSTICE FOR TRAINSONG

The power of community organizing

Dharmika's Story

For two and a half decades, Dharmika Henshel has lived in the Trainsong neighborhood. She raised her son there, where she was concerned about her fruit trees being contaminated by a toxic plume underground from the nearby Union Pacific Railroad operations. For years, she and other residents in this quaint and close-knit neighborhood have been bombarded with toxic fumes from J.H. Baxter, noisy train traffic at all hours, and most recently low-frequency noise and vibrations from Zip-O-Logs mill. This community actively faces environmental harms caused by nearby manufacturers and industry. Driven by necessity, Dharmika has long fought against industrial pollution to protect her neighborhood from big industrial polluters.

Now, the community faces what Dharmika calls an “existential threat.” USD Clean Fuels, a Texas-based company, has plans to build a biofuels transloading station, sending more railcars and tanker trucks through the neighborhood. The list of concerns is long, but most threatening is the risk of explosion as highly flammable fuels are brought through the neighborhood. Residents are worried about toxic emissions, air and noise pollution, and traffic hazards as families live just across the street from the proposed facility. “To have explosive truck traffic up and down our little street and that they want to operate all day and night, it just doesn’t make sense,” Dharmika said.



Above: Dharmika exposing the disproportionate toxic pollution in Trainsong at a tour stop during our Environmental Justice Solidarity Bus Tour.

People are riled up... I haven't really ever seen this amount of proactive activism in my neighborhood.

~ Dharmika Henshell

With this renewed sense of passion and action, Dharmika is hopeful that we can stop USD Clean Fuels from coming into Trainsong.

On September 30th, with the help of the Crag Law Center, we filed a petition with the State Land Use Board of Appeals to demand that the City of Eugene withdraw its zoning decision. **Our challenge resulted in the City withdrawing its permission for the project on October 11th.** The City now has until January 10th to make a final decision to withdraw, modify, or re-approve the USD fuel transfer project. We are keeping the legal and grassroots pressure strong, as we guide the City to use their authority to deny this public health menace!

Pollution Policy Update:

The plight of pollution-burdened neighborhoods is a pressing problem for communities throughout Oregon. That is why Beyond Toxics is actively fighting for policy reform that builds public health standards into our land use and zoning laws.

Locally, we are urging the adoption of the Eugene **Public Health Development Standards**. At the state level, we are advocating for the passage of the **Planning for Healthy Communities Act**. Both policies will embed environmental health and justice principles in Oregon's land use laws.