

## Media Advisory - 9/16/2015

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## Governor's Environmental Justice Task Force to Meet in Medford Sept. 25th

### *Public Testimony Invited*

Medford, OR. Local organizations to host Governor's Environmental Justice Taskforce at the [Fairness for the Land and the Worker: 2015 Oregon Environmental Justice Forum](#). The forum will take place on Friday, September 25th at the Medford Public Library, 205 S Central Ave. in Medford. A public presentation on "What does Environmental Justice Look Like in Southern Oregon?" begins at 11:30 and features a panel of workers' rights advocates from around the region. Public testimony will be received by the Task Force from 2:00-3:30. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend. The event is bilingual and a Spanish translator and translation headsets will be provided. A coalition of five regional environmental justice organizations are hosting the Medford forum: Beyond Toxics, the Northwest Forest Worker Center, PCUN- Northwest Tree Planters and Farmworkers United, UNETE, and Oregon Action.

Virginia Camberos of the Northwest Forest Worker Center welcomes the Governor's Task Force to Medford. Camberos works closely with forestry workers and sees the impacts of environmental justice issues in our community. "Harsh working conditions and exposure to toxic chemicals is a serious concern to all workers, and especially Latino workers," Camberos says.

Dagoberto Morales is director of UNETE, a farm worker and immigrant advocacy organization based in Medford that is helping organize the forum. "It's time for state agencies to listen to the concerns of the workers," said Morales.

Fourteen state agencies are participants in the Environmental Justice Task Force and report annually on steps they are taking to ensure that their actions address the interests of all Oregonians. "Oregon government officials rarely pay attention to the rural communities of Southern Oregon where minority and rural communities are struggling." says Joel Iboa, community organizer at Beyond Toxics. "This is a unique opportunity for this Task Force."

This commission was created by the passage of Senate Bill 420 in 2007. Senate Bill 420 calls for environmental justice in Oregon by ensuring that all persons affected by decisions of natural resource agencies have a voice in those decisions. The bill set up a task force - Environmental Justice Task Force, or EJTF - to advise the Governor and natural resource agencies on environmental justice policies.

A feature of the Forum is a panel: "*What does Environmental Justice Look Like in Southern Oregon?*" The speakers come from a long and respected history of organizing for workers' rights. Ramon Ramirez, President PCUN; Dagoberto Morales, UNETE; Carl Wilmsen, NW Forest Worker Center; and Joel Iboa, Beyond Toxics.

For additional information about the Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force contact, Chair Ben Duncan [benjamin.e.duncan@multco.us](mailto:benjamin.e.duncan@multco.us) or Co-Chair Jon Ostar [jon@opalpdx.org](mailto:jon@opalpdx.org). For more information about providing public testimony contact, Joel Iboa: 541-465-8860 or via email: [jiboa@beyondtoxics.org](mailto:jiboa@beyondtoxics.org).