

Campaign Targets Diesel Trucks and Buses

Photo Essay

By Scott Braley





The Bay Area Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaborative “Don’t Sit Idle” campaign launched with awareness events in six communities. Starting at 3 a.m., residents of San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, and San Leandro distributed anti-idling fliers to truck and bus drivers as well as local residents. While a law limiting diesel truck idling to five minutes has been in place for a year, it is sporadically enforced and a loophole allows truckers to idle their vehicles overnight.

Diesel exhaust was declared a toxic air contaminant in 1998 by the California Air Resources Board. It is harmful to respiratory health, particularly in children and the elderly. Numerous studies connect air pollution to asthma, premature death, lung cancer, and other respiratory conditions. The Bay Area is second only to Los Angeles in health incidences due to diesel pollution. Some communities, like Bayview Hunters Point and West Oakland, have asthma hospitalization rates as much as ten times higher than neighboring communities.

The Collaborative, however, sees truckers not as the problem but as part of the solution. “Truckers are part of this community—we live and work here—we owe it to our communities, and ourselves, to stop idling,” says Bill Aboudi, Operations Manager for AB Trucking.

In June 2004, a group of environmental health and justice organizations started developing a regional strategy to reduce diesel pollution. The Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaborative is now more than 20 organizations and 100 individuals strong, and represents neighborhoods from across the region.



■ “Idling wastes fuel and money. And it is bad for our lungs as well as our wallets,” says Trent Willis, president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10.



■ “It has fallen on our communities to get the word out about the health, environmental, and legal ramifications of diesel idling,” says Karen Pierce of the Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates. “Limiting truck idling to five minutes isn’t courtesy, it’s the law.”



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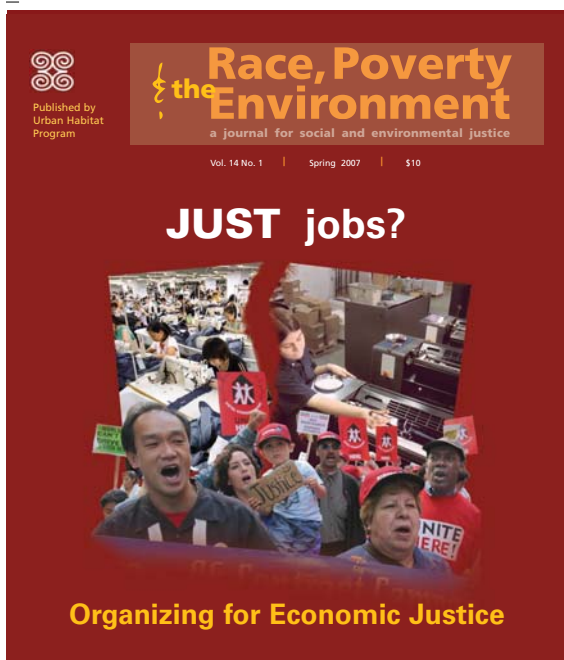
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