

Do you live near factories or other sources of pollution? Share your experiences with California Watch by going to <http://bit.ly/maywood>.

If you want to alert us to issues in your community without waiting for us to contact you, text MAYWOOD to 30644.



**A Field Guide to
Maywood Pollution
Issues**
By Ashley Alvarado

In a series of articles for California Watch and USC Annenberg's Reporting on Health project, veteran reporter Janet Wilson detailed the Martin family's illnesses, including irritable bowel syndrome, an ovarian cyst, skin rashes, chronic nausea, diarrhea, asthma and depression. The story also examined the environment in their town, Maywood – polluted water, lead and proximity to freeways and some 2,000 factories. Through biomonitoring, it was revealed that the family had unusually high levels of six heavy metals and several dioxins, which can be byproducts of burning, smelting and other chlorinated industrial processes, as well as volcanoes or fires.

The residents of Maywood have been dealing with pollution for some time. There is even a documentary, "Aguas con el agua," about the city's water issues. And there are a number of community members, officials and nonprofits dedicated to improving conditions.

On these pages, you will find a field guide to these key players: names, contact information, accomplishments and insight into their stated goals in the community. Are we missing anyone? Please e-mail Public Engagement Manager Ashley Alvarado at aalvarado@californiawatch.org or call her at 714-796-3518 with your suggestions.

California Communities Against Toxics

Contact: P.O. Box 845, Rosamond, 661-510-3412, www.stoptoxics.org.

About: The California Communities Against Toxics environmental justice advocacy group was founded in East L.A. in 1989. Since then it has focused on preventing the building of new polluting facilities in communities of color, uniting Native Americans and people of color in inner cities and rural communities, and

raising the profile of environmental justice issues.

Coalition for Clean Air

Contact: 811 W. 7 St., Suite 1100, L.A., 213-630-1192, www.coalitionforcleanair.org.

About: The Coalition for Clean Air provides advice and assistance to community groups and residents about air quality and other environmental issues. It strives to build partnerships between community members and decision makers, including elected officials and environmental agency representatives, to work together to reduce the cumulative pollution in Maywood.

Comité Pro-Uno

Contact: 4020 E. Slauson Ave., Maywood, 323-560-1111, pro1centro@aol.com.

About: Founded on November 20, 1997, this is a grassroots, community-based environmental justice organization in Maywood. It has focused on questions of environmental health, raising awareness of the hazards in the community. It aims to heighten awareness of environmental issues in Maywood, including polluted water and land. Maywood City Councilman Felipe Aguirre, who co-founded the organization, says the it was formed in part to educate people about the relationship between environmental hazards and health issues.

Del Amo Action Committee

Contact: Co-chair Cynthia Babich can be reached at 310-769-4813 or pemodog@aol.com.

About: This Torrance-based committee has been very active in the Maywood area. Its mission includes advocating for the health and safety of communities through partnerships, networking and encouraging multiculturalism and economic diversity. The committee also organized Maywood

Community Inter-Agency Partnership, which is working to address environmental priorities in Maywood: drinking water quality, diesel emissions from trucks and rail yards, nearby secondary lead smelter, cleanup of contaminated sites, among them.

Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

Contact: 309 Alameda Blvd., West Sacramento, 916-371-3853, www.ejcw.org.

About: A network of more than 50 grassroots and intermediary organizations, the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water works with community members so that they can participate in water planning and policy decisions. Its goal is to ensure community members are empowered to participate in water decisions, hold policy makers accountable and build a community-based collective movement for water management in the state.

Padres Unidos de Maywood

Contact: 3622 E. Slauson Ave., Maywood; alvahector1@yahoo.es.

About: For nine years, Maywood residents have met to identify solutions in a city "where the water, land and politics are polluted." They've participated in campaigns against police checkpoints, to get the EPA to spend more time and resources on Pemaco, a superfund site, and to get out the vote for local elections.

Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez

Contact: 320 West 4th St., Room 1050, Los Angeles, 213-620-4646, www.asmdc.org/speaker.

About: Pérez was elected in 2008 to represent the 46th Assembly District, which includes Maywood, Vernon, Huntington Park, Boyle Heights, downtown L.A., East L.A. and parts of South L.A. He became Speaker of the Assembly in March 2010.

He has been a vocal advocate for improving the quality of water in Maywood. He was part of the campaign to get AB 890, the City of Maywood Safe Drinking Water Act, signed by the governor. The measure requires three local water providers to improve water quality, provide annual water statements and participate in public hearings.

South Coast Air Quality Management District

Contact: 21865 Copley Dr., Diamond Bar, 909-396-2000, www.aqmd.gov.

About: This air pollution control agency covers Orange County as well as the urban stretches of L.A., Riverside and San Bernardino counties and aims to improve residents' health while promoting business.

Unión de Vecinos

Contact: 3622 E. Slauson Ave., Maywood.

About: Led by Leonardo Vilchis and Elizabeth Blaney, Unión de Vecinos is a community-based nonprofit active in Maywood and Boyle Heights. Nearly 2,000 volunteers participate in projects that focus on issues that include but are not limited to environmental justice, affordable housing and healthy communities. Unión de Vecinos has worked alongside other organizations to identify pollutants in Maywood and develop action plans.

Urban Semillas

Contact: 5317 N. Figueroa St., L.A., 323-568-1171, www.urbansemillas.com.

About: A community-based environmental advocacy group, Urban Semillas has been active in regional and statewide efforts, including water education and Whittier Narrows. Its goals are to educate underserved, Spanish-speaking communities on social justice and watershed issues and provide them with community-building skills.