



## Los Angeles Environmental Justice Youth Conference draws dozens of students

More than 40 young people from an environmentally burdened stretch of Los Angeles County learned about effects of toxic contaminants in their neighborhoods at an environmental youth conference in Boyle Heights.

The Los Angeles EJ Youth Conference on the Environment was organized and coordinated by the Los Angeles Environmental Justice Network and is one of several EJ community projects that the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is funding through its Statewide Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Grant from USEPA.

Cynthia Babich, director of the Del Almo Action Committee; Jane Williams, executive director of California Communities Against Toxics; Robina Suwol, executive director of California Safe Schools; and Jesse Marquez, executive director of the Coalition for a Safe Environment, played crucial roles in organizing the conference with youth leaders.

The young people, ranging from elementary to high school students, live along the Interstate 710 corridor that extends from Long Beach north through Los Angeles. The heavily industrialized area includes many low income- minority communities, and is considered to be a [priority area](#) for environmental justice by federal and state agencies.

Students learned about GIS maps and which government agency to report any observed environmental problems. Working with youth leaders, they will participate in community monitoring and reporting of any illegal dumping of electronic waste (E-waste) and hazardous wastes in their communities. The student groups, will develop a work plan to map illegal e- wastes dumping locations, as well as diesel truck idling hot spots adjacent to schools, and public places in their communities. Representatives from State and Federal government organizations attended, including Brian Johnson, Deputy Director for DTSC's Hazardous Waste Management Program, and Jared Blumenfeld, Region 9, USEPA Administrator.

The youth will continue the GIS mapping of these locations and follow up to ensure the project plan is working. Once the mapping is completed, The Air Resources Board will work with local city governments to provide "No Idling Signs" for posting at the hot spot locations throughout the 710 corridor communities.

The agenda included presentations on the following topics:

- "Be the Change you want to see in the World" Introduction speech by Roger Kintz, DTSC Environmental Justice Coordinator;
- "Key environmental laws"- Jane Williams, [California Communities against Toxics](#);
- "Overview of DTSC"- Florence Gharibian, Retired DTSC;



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- “U.S.EPA and You” – Jared Blumenfeld, U.S. EPA Regional Administrator;
- “Anti-idling laws and how communities use them”-Michelle Shultz Wood, Air Resources Board;

Activities and demonstrations were presented on the following:

- How toxins enter the environment and us - Jane Williams;
- Particle sizing demonstration and PM10, PM2.2 and Ultrafines-Holly Thorn, California Communities Against Toxics;
- DTSC soil and water sampling and tour of the Sampling Van-Roger Kintz & Nabil Yacoub, DTSC;
- Scientific equipment used to detect toxins in the air-Jessie Marquez, [Coalition for a Safe Environment](#) and Roger Kintz;
- GIS mapping and how to use it in your community-Robina Suwol, [California Safe Schools](#), and Jorine Campopiano, U.S. EPA.

Jane Williams speaks to participants of the conference





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Students participated in a 2013 Youth Summit, at the Los Angeles Environmental Justice Network meeting held on August 13, 2013.





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