



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

NEWS RELEASE

Date: August 20, 2002

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP SUES FOUR CALIFORNIA COUNTY AIR DISTRICTS AND TOP OFFICERS

San Francisco, California -- Our Children's Earth sued four California Air Pollution Control Districts and the Air Pollution Control Officers of each District for failing to issue more than 40 federal Clean Air Act permits.

Major sources of pollution have been allowed to bypass the federal Clean Air Act for years because the District has been lax in taking final action on 44 long-outstanding operating permit applications, as required by the Clean Air Act. Failure to take action on the permits means that the public is unable to monitor thousands of tons of potential annual air pollution, including hazardous emissions, from area air pollution sources.

"It's a sad day when we have to ask a court to order the Air Pollution Control District to do its job," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth. "There is no excuse for the Board's failure to issue required air pollution permits to some of the largest sources of air pollution in the state."

The lawsuits, filed today in California Superior Court, charges the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, the San Joaquin Valley Unified County Air Pollution Control District and the Placer County Air Pollution Control District and the Districts' top officers with failing to comply with federal law to issue these Major Facility Review permits. Many of the applications were submitted as far back as 1996 and 1997 and the Districts' deadlines for issuing the permits were in 1999. The result is that more than 44 major sources of air pollution, including oil refineries, power plants, landfills and waste treatment facilities do not have the permits and are not required to abide by compliance reporting, record-keeping and monitoring requirements that such a permit would have mandated. These are also the requirements that industry fought against when the federal law mandating them passed in 1990. Without these requirements, the public has few ways of discovering whether these major sources of air pollution are violating the clean air laws.

The Air District is responsible for enforcing federal and state clean air standards intended to protect humans from exposure to toxics, including cancer-causing chemicals, and to reduce smog. A recent California Air Resources Board study has shown that children playing sports in smoggy areas are more than three times likely to have asthma than children who weren't exercising in bad air.

"Citizens have a right to know whether these plants are in compliance with the law or not, and the Board must enforce the laws that were put into place for that very reason," said Christopher Sproul, an attorney for OCE.

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