

*El Pueblo Para El Aire y Agua Limpio/People for Clean Air and Water
Kids Protecting Our Planet
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment*

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Contact:

Ingrid Brostrom, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (661) 586-2611 (cell)

Maricela Mares Alatorre, El Pueblo 559-816-9298

Bradley Angel, Greenaction (415) 722-5270 (cell)

**In Pursuit of Health, Justice & An End to Racial Discrimination,
Kettleman City Residents File Complaints Charging Kings County
with Violation of Federal and State Civil Rights Laws**

**Residents Ask U.S. Department of Justice, Department of Transportation and
State Attorney General Jerry Brown to Enforce Civil Rights Laws**

**Complaints Allege Kings County Used Racial Discrimination in Permit Process
for Proposed Expansion of Chemical Waste Management Toxic Dump**

Kettleman City, CA – Latino Kettleman City residents and their community groups El Pueblo Para El Aire y Agua Limpio/People for Clean Air and Water and Kids Protecting Our Planet today filed administrative complaints (not lawsuits) alleging that Kings County has practiced racial discrimination in violation of federal and state civil rights laws.

Represented by the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment, the residents' complaints were filed with the Department of Transportation (DOT) asking the federal government to protect residents' civil rights by enforcing the mandates of Title VI of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Residents also are filing a complaint with the State of California and are asking Attorney General Jerry Brown to enforce California Government Code section 11135, the state's civil rights law.

As a recipient of federal funding from the DOT and state funding from Caltrans, Kings County is prohibited by civil rights laws from practicing racial discrimination or taking actions that would have a discriminatory or disproportionate impact on low-income and people of color such as the Latino, heavily Spanish-speaking farmworker community of Kettleman City.

The civil rights complaints document a long-standing pattern and practice of blatant racial discrimination by Kings County against Latinos and Spanish-speaking residents. For example, at the County's "public hearing" in October 2009 on the proposed dump expansion, Latino Spanish-speakers were allocated only half the time to testify as English speakers were given. Latino residents attending hearing were met with K-9 police squads and heavy police intimidation. Latinos were systematically excluded from the County's Local Assessment Committee, which was part of the permit process.

In addition, the County's EIR acknowledged that the proposed dump expansion would have significant negative impacts on Kettleman City that could be not mitigated, but issued the permit anyway.

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