



Activist Info

RICHMOND PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE

Climate Justice Training in Richmond September 18-21

Community leaders of Richmond and the international climate justice community invite you to spend 3 days learning, building, & preparing for action!

Tired of hearing about climate change? Then do something.

In order to bring our climate back to the safe zone and avoid catastrophic consequences, we need to make massive emissions cuts *now*. There's only one way we can achieve that: we need to turn the political heat way up — and push back the corporate and business lobbyists who use false solutions (clean coal and carbon offsets) to keep polluting and profiting.

The 2009 West Coast Convergence for Climate Justice is a three-day training and movement-building conference for west coast activists. Join us to learn about climate change and climate politics, to support local communities in their ongoing fights for climate justice, & to build a stronger Climate Justice movement on the West Coast leading up to the days of action on October 24th and November 30th and international climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December.

See Workshop List
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Register Now.
There is no charge-meals and materials will be provided but space is limited
To register:
www.west.climateconvergence.org
Or call Margaret Jordan 510-412-3673

Evening Sessions Open to the public

Friday 9/18 6:30:

The Richmond community's struggle
against Chevron

Saturday 9/19 : 5:00

Dinner and a Party

St. Luke's United Methodist Church
3200 Barrett Ave Richmond



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Richmond Left With Toxic Site

A recent agreement leaves Richmond with a toxic waste dump.

Located on the Richmond South Shoreline, north of Pt. Isabel, is a 30 acre moonscape looking property. It's also visible from most spots in the local hills if you're elevated enough to see the shoreline. From the Bay Trail and the hills you see a lifeless gray area that is 350,000 cubic yards of toxic soil. It was created with callous disregard and deliberate evasion of laws regarding disposal of hazardous waste. The area, commonly referred to as the Zeneca Site, was once owned by a corporation now known as Astra Zeneca. This site had been classified as a Superfund site.

What can be called a tragedy and a travesty started about ten years ago when this site, which has a history of over 100 years of chemical, pesticide and fertilizer manufacturing, was dismantled and crushed with a demolition permit printed on 5" X 7" index card issued by the City of Richmond. What followed was the digging, moving, storing, mixing and spreading around of hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of highly toxic soil, some of it transported from the UC Field Station next door. This toxic mix is now under a temporary cap that wears away with the wind and rain. What makes this all worse is that in early 2004 a residential development proposal was rolled out before the public, presented as a smart growth project. The proposed development, slated to be built on top of the capped toxins, would have had fans blowing 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week, whisking away hazardous soil gas that would accumulate underneath over 1,400 residential units. Needless to say the community was incredulous.

Stalwart activists, nearby residents and businesses in the area, as well as community-minded people fought to make this fiasco public and transparent. In 2005, with the backing of an organized and vigilant community, then-Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin was successful in having the cleanup oversight transferred to the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The DTSC unlike the RWQCB has, as one its mandates, protection of the public health and has trained toxicologists on staff. Also in 2005, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) was created as part of DTSC's public process. The members of the CAG have been working diligently for 4 years now reviewing thousands upon thousands of pages related to the historic use and legacy of this site, as well as analyzing and commenting detail by detail on the complexities of the ongoing cleanup.

Recently a monetary settlement on a Summary of Violations (SOV) issued by DTSC was settled by the two parties, Zeneca and UC

Field Station, named in the SOV for creating what is basically a hazardous waste dump. They settled for about \$500,000. The negotiations were kept secret and failed to consult or include the CAG's comprehensive body of research (professional and volunteer). At the CAG's monthly meeting recently the state attorney who negotiated this settlement showed up and said to the CAG, I never knew you were here. What he failed to negotiate was the removal of the dump. This mountain of toxic dirt remains in place on our shoreline, while the parties involved in this irresponsible "cleanup" received what amounts to a slap on the wrist. This dirt is bad -- real bad -- the kind that warrants trained personnel when it is handled. As far as the businesses in the area, the neighbors to the east, the bay, the worms, mudsuckers that have been impacted hormonally (growing



both ovaries and testes) and the endangered clapper rails, they have to live with this bad dirt, this toxic mound, brought to us by corporations who attempted a cheap fix.

—Paul Kilkenny

Paul Kilkenny is a steering committee member of the RPA and regularly attends CAG meetings.

The CAG meets in the "Multi-purpose room" in the newly remodeled Downtown Richmond Civic Center 440 Civic Center Plaza (between Nevin and Barrett Streets) every 2nd Thursday of the month.

This Thursdays meeting starts at 6:30 and has special presentations by the US-EPA California Site Cleanup Branch and DTSC's Enforcement representative, Mr. Gale Filter.



Clean Air and Healthy Jobs! Cap the Crude!

On August 15 400 protesters from Richmond and around the Bay Area came together in a demonstration demanding Climate Justice. The action was held in Richmond, the site of refinery of Chevron, 5th largest corporation in the world and the biggest polluter in the Bay Area. In addition to the demands above the demonstrators called on Chevron to put in writing its verbal commitment that it will not refine cruder oil.

This action, the first of a series leading up to the Copenhagen Climate Talks was organized by the Mobilization for Climate Justice-West, a coalition of 35 organizations working to get **Corporations Out of Copenhagen Climate Talks**

A rally at the beginning of the event featured speakers (including Gayle McLaughlin, Mayor of Richmond and Torm Nompraseurt of APEN), and music and entertainment. Richmond resident, Fred Jackson gave a great performance of his song, "When the Ozone is Gone." Charles Smith (AFSCME Local 444) emphasized that unions and environmentalists should work together to demand safe working conditions and a healthy environment. Diane Brown (Richmond teacher) described the school crisis in Richmond and pointed out the irony that this educational calamity for children and teachers exists in Richmond, a key location of Chevron, California's largest corporation.

The march to the Chevron refinery gates passed a community health fair being held at the Nevin Center. Dr. Henry Clark of the West County Toxics Coalition explained to the gathered crowd the importance of forcing Chevron to come up with an expansion plan that protects the health of the Richmond's citizens.

At the rally at the Chevron gate speakers representing struggles against Chevron in Burma, the Philippines, Ecuador, and Nigeria spoke in solidarity with all struggles for Climate Justice.

Although they had been assured that the march would be peaceful, police from around Contra Costa County were present in force to protect Chevron from the marchers. As a result of a non-violent civil disobedience action fourteen individuals were arrested for trespassing.

—Margaret Jordan



Photos as marked by Joe Woodard
www.woodard.freemanbusiness.com
Other photos by Mike Parker

Current Details and other events are listed on
[RPA Info on Public Events Calendar](#)
If you want your event listed send it to
RPAactivist@gmail.com

"Crude: The Real Price of Oil"

is an award-winning documentary about the legal drama of 30,000 Ecuadorian rainforest dwellers facing down Chevron.

It will be playing at the Shattuck Cinema in Berkeley for one week only: Sept.25-Oct.1.

It will also be playing at the Lumiere in SF the same week, and there will be a premiere party with Amazon Watch on Sept.25.

see www.chevrontoxico.com/crude for more info.

Its Time to Talk about Fair Taxes

Everywhere we seem to be fighting fires caused by the twin economic and budget crises. Fighting fires is usually a figure of speech but now it is literally true. It turns out that one of the reasons that the fires in Southern California are so devastating is that the agencies ran out of money for preventative measures earlier this year.

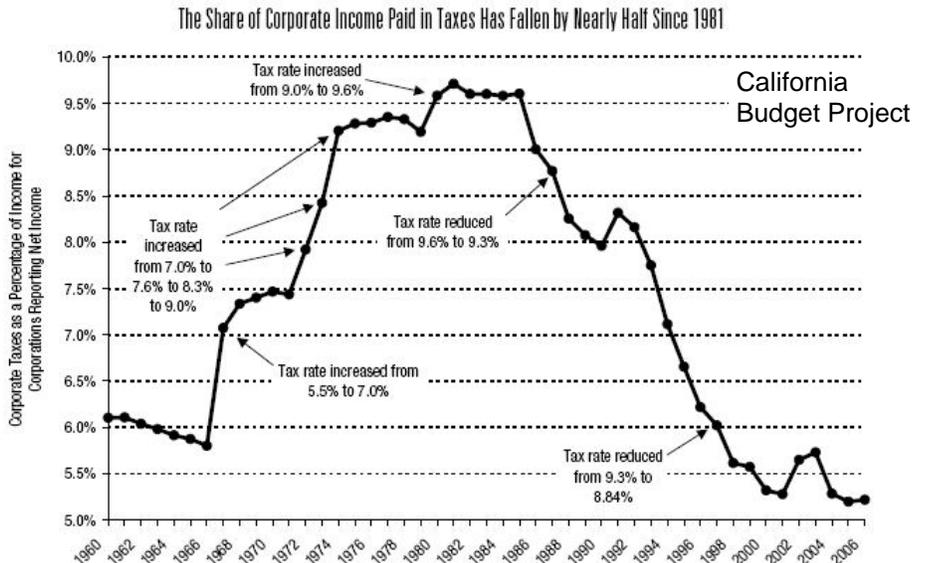
Nothing is being left untouched. We are now applying slash and burn techniques to our school system, our parks, and government services. The City of Richmond like every other city is now looking to make cuts to bring its budget in line with diminishing income caused by the economic crisis. As with many other things the city is attempting to find creative ways of handling this problem which provides both fairness to city workers and maintains social services. Stay tuned.

All too often budget cuts are just an excuse by management to privatize work, break unions or otherwise reorganize with opposition. The current University of California "cuts" are this kind of management opportunism.

But even where they are necessary in the short run budget cuts are usually counterproductive in the long run. First they work directly against attempts to stimulate the economy. Second the cuts usually come from long range projects which end up being costlier over all. If you put off repairs to save money now, chances are they will be much more expensive later on. If you kill preventive medical programs, the costs in emergency rooms sky rocket. And cuts rarely address the real waste in they system like politically-connected corporate subsidies or the penal system which fails by almost every measure.

So if budget cuts are the wrong approach. Isn't it time we start talking about how to get proper funding to maintain necessary programs. The right wing has managed to get this issue of fair taxation off the table. We have to put it back on. Corporations and the very wealthy have managed to shift the tax burden onto working people. According to the California Budget Project the share in Corporate Income paid in Taxes has been cut in half since 1981.

Much of this has to be done at the state level including restoring the *progressive* income tax, and fair property tax rates for corporations. Until we start on this, we can't "budget-cut" our way out of this crisis.



A Labor Notes Class for Unionists:

Fixing the Tax System

Fred Glass

Communications Director,
California Federation of Teachers

California has tremendous wealth. There is no good reason we can not afford decent public services with workers paid good wages and benefits. Tools for unions and other organizations.

Tuesday September 29. 7pm
CWA Local 9415
1831 Park Blvd
Oakland

Resources on tax issues:

California Budget Project www.cbp.org/
California Tax Reform Association
<http://caltaxreform.org/>
American Federation of Teachers www.cft.org,



—Mike Parker

WORKSHOPS

For Climate Justice Training Sept 18-21

See page 1

- Climate Justice 101
- Chevron 101: what Chevron is doing locally, nationally, and internationally and how we can counter them
- Solar energy / Other forms of local energy / Energy options in a resource-constrained future
- Art-based action & cultural expression in protest
- Misleading media messages around climate
- Corporations vs. the climate: what corporations are up to between now and the Copenhagen climate talks
- Battle of the story
- Traditional knowledge
- Anti-oppression / Alliance-building
- School gardens
- Power Analysis
- Media 101 Anti-oppression / Alliance-building
- Organizing 101
- Introduction to non-violent direct action
- Emergency Preparedness: what to do when a climate disaster hits you
- Tar sands
- Campaign planning: international and local
- City council meeting and action planning discussion
- Permaculture
- Participatory action research
- Creating your own media: Online organizing, Pirate Radio, Zines, Stencils, Gorrilla marketing
- Fossil fuels vs. true green economy
- Direct action strategic planning
- Labor and Climate Justice
- The Road to Copenhagen: what's happening in December in Copenhagen and why it's important
- Local Climate Initiatives
- Guerrilla theater
- Climate Education – how to talk about climate justice to broad audiences
- Big Oil expansion plans across the continent
- Art build for convergence action
- Door knocking for bringing local residents out for the city council meeting on Tuesday
- Indigenous and other frontline community climate justice struggles
- Urban toxins and health: natural and affordable ways to heal from and defend against urban toxins

Green Visions:

A Permaculture Bike Tour through Richmond & El Cerrito

Sunday September 13, 2009

Start: Richmond BART (West entrance) at 11 AM

Meet us at our Tiller Park lunchbreak at 1:20 PM

End: Near El Cerrito Plaza BART at 4 PM

View and visit inspiring public and private sites:

We'll travel along the streets, waterways, and greenways of Richmond and El Cerrito visiting gardens and parks featuring examples of community activism, school gardens, urban farming, tree crops, animal husbandry, greywater systems, soil and water remediation and restoration.



Although the bike route is not difficult, we welcome automobile accompaniment (fuel efficient/biodiesel preferred) with ride sharing for folks without bikes or unable to ride.

Contact Diana, 510 655-8252 if you have any questions about the tour, need flyers, or if you can offer rides, or if you need one.

Bring water and your own bag lunch or food to share.

See our wiki website about the tour:

<http://recbiketour.pbworks.com/>

Co-sponsored by:

Richmond Spokes, Urban Tilth and the 5% Local Coalition, and the Watershed Project

RPA Activist Info

is for Richmond community members who want to be active in taking on the problems of the environment, racism, joblessness, housing, and crime to create a healthy Richmond. We believe that community involvement means more than voting every two years. It means regular communication with the candidates we elect, letting them know our issues and positions, supporting them as they try to take our issues forward. It means we attend meetings, use the email, phone our neighbors, or go on marches building an organized movement to create real change.

Comments and columns are welcome. Signed articles and columns are the views of the author and not necessarily those of the RPA. Send photos, articles, and comments to RPAactivist@gmail.com or call the RPA at 510-595-4661