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Press Release

Environmental Justice Bus Tour Marks a First for Oregon

A bus tour into the heart of our community to include local leaders and federal agencies

3/28/2012 (Eugene, OR) Beyond Toxics and Centro LatinoAmericano will be hosting a bus tour into West Eugene's Industrial Corridor neighborhoods to raise awareness about environmental justice issues the people who live there face every day. On **Friday, April 13th**, local leaders, members of key federal agencies and invited press will gather at Cascade Middle School in Eugene at 10:30 am for departure at 11.

The model of an Environmental Justice Community Tour, or "Toxics Tour," has been widely used throughout the nation as a grassroots community organizing tool to engage residents and major decision-makers in addressing social and environmental justice issues. The Bus Tour of West Eugene on April 13th is the first time this type of environmental health event has happened in Oregon.

According to the US EPA, nearly fifty air and toxic release sites and two Superfund sites are listed within the nine square mile area of West Eugene. Industrial sites and transportation routes are sources of chemical releases that can severely impact health. Residents of West Eugene face the release of over 437,000 pounds of airborne toxic chemical emissions from industrial sources alone. (Source: City of Eugene Toxics Inventory – 2010). Those who live in these neighborhoods, such as Bethel, Trainsong and River Road, face more frequent and intense exposures than other areas of Eugene.

The planned bus tour, hosted by environmental justice leaders and community members, will guide attendees to multiple sites in each residential neighborhood where environmental hazards are suspected. Following the tour, community residents and government and representatives from federal and state agencies will gather for a forum at the Petersen Barn Community Center. Area residents will have a chance to tell their personal stories of exposure and health concerns. Some parents are likely to talk about caring for children who become sick after smelling foul, polluted air in their neighborhoods. All who attend will have an opportunity for dialogue about multiple issues, including responsiveness, human and environmental rights and transparency in West Eugene.

Beyond Toxics received a 2011-2012 US EPA Environmental Justice award to work with residents in Eugene's Industrial Corridor on health, environment and education. The bus tour is one of the culminating activities and has attracted attention and reservations from as far north as Seattle and Portland. More than 80 people are expected to take the tour.

For more information, please contact Beyond Toxics through Environmental Justice Outreach Coordinator, Alison Guzman, <mailto:environmentaljustice@beyondtoxics.org> or call: 541-465-8860.