

# "Ten Years Is Too Long," Says Hahn

*Air Quality Forum Strikes Urgent Tone For Faster Cleanup*

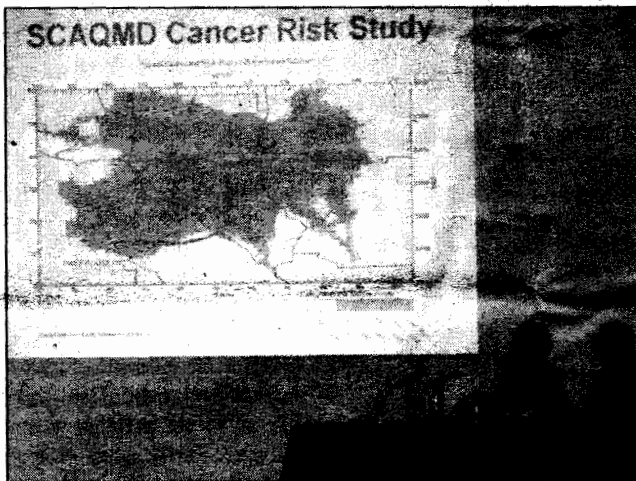
*By Paul Rosenberg, Senior Editor*

**T**he phrase "diesel death zone" completed its journey from margin to center on Saturday, Aug. 12, as Councilwoman Janice Hahn used the phrase to set an urgent tone in her opening remarks at an air quality forum she sponsored at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. "People are dying," Hahn went on to say, adding that she knew five people suffering from cancer.

Hahn cited figures from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) that goods movement contributes to 750 premature deaths in California annually (later revised to 2,400). After noting that the two local ports' recently released Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) calls for cutting pollution 50 percent in ten years, Hahn said, "I think ten years is too long.... Every year we don't achieve those goals is deadly."

The panel of presenters included two activist leaders, and the head of CARB's Environmental Justice Section, Dale Shimp.

Elina Green, project manager of the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma, opened with an impressive powerpoint presentation drawing on a wide range of health and environmental studies to drive home the seriousness and magnitude of the health costs being imposed on Southern California's communities by the goods movement industry. Green cited \$19 billion in annual costs imposed on Southern California communities, and \$3-\$8 in benefits for each \$1 invested in reducing air pollution.



The map of cancer risk levels from the AQMD's MATES-II was a visually ominous part of the presentation by Elina Green of the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma. Photo courtesy of the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

focusing on low sulfur fuels. Citing the example of Maersk's recent voluntary conversion announcement, Havenick said a 35 percent reduction could be achieved simply by making low sulfur fuels mandatory for all ships serving the local ports.

Afterwards, former Port Commissioner Camila Townsend said, "It was an extremely educational presentation, and very much needed."

In her new role as the Chamber of Commerce's Chief Executive, she said she hoped to bring such information to the Chamber as well.

Next was Rafael Pizarro, Senior Campaign Associate with ~~the Coalition~~ for Clean Air (CCA). Pizarro is a former labor organizer, with high-level experience at SEIU's famed Local 1199.

He wasted little time in dismissing the false dichotomy of playing off dirty air versus the threat of lost jobs.

"It's a lie asking the question 'which would you rather die of? Hunger or cancer?'" he said.

Pizarro's main thrust was that we can have both clean air and a healthy economy, but only if everyone pays their fair share. That's why CCA is strongly supporting Alan Lowenthal's bill, SB 760 that would impose a \$30 container fee to pay for air quality, port security and cleaner new infrastructure.

He ended with a pitch for audience members' active support for Lowenthal's bill.

"Tell the Governor. Tell the Legislature. Business should pay their fair share. Make polluters pay. ~~Make the shippers pay their fair share,~~" he concluded.

Finally, Shimp provided an overview of CARB's current and forthcoming efforts to improve local air quality. The Environmental Justice section is especially focused on "problems falling through the cracks" of earlier conventional approaches to air quality control, he explained, which involves much greater sensitivity to the needs of those who lack political connections and resources to take advantage of existing programs. It also focuses in developing a new generation of monitoring devices to get much more accurate information on how communities like Wilmington, Carson and San Pedro are affected block-by-block.

During the question-and-answer period, Richard Havenick, chair of the Port Community Advisory Committee's Air Quality Subcommittee, urged people to comment on the CAAP, fo-