California Coastal Commission Comments 05/12/2022

By Charming Evelyn

Chair – Water Committee Angeles Chapter Sierra Club

I am here today to ask you to support the staff recommendation, despite pressure from Gov. Newsom. I ask this of you based on the mistakes made with Carlsbad when other Commissioners caved in from pressure from a previous Governor to the detriment of the environment and underserved communities.

To quote the LA Times this is a defining moment for the Coastal Commission. We the public cannot afford to pay lobbyists or go to fancy birthday parties with Gov. Newsom and his Poseidon lobbyist friend during a pandemic.

Of course, Gov. Newsom will refer to the average voter as dumb, we have no access to him. We’re not rich or connected enough.

Has he taken the time to consult the neighbors who live near the ASCON Superfund site or sent any of his staff? A site so many years later the DTSC has not been able to mitigate? A site that Poseidon has provided no mitigation for in their EIR?

Let’s talk about **Contamination Migration**

Migration of contaminated soil with Exide has spread to a 1.7-mile radius. The EPA and DTSC have concluded that other parcels of land need to be investigated for contamination, and contamination is thought to have spread 5 miles away from the source. Let’s compare that timeline to the ASCON site and ask, how far has contamination migrated in 84 years? What about groundwater contamination? The ASCON site began operations in 1938 and was shut down in 1984.

Here are some of the volatile organic compounds found in 2006 in groundwater. Benzene in 6 wells, ranging from 0.51-70 mcg/L; trimethylbenzene, dichlorobenzene, ethylbenzene, isopropylbenzene and the list goes on. In well B7 isopropylbenzene topped 200 mcg/L.

**Semi-volatile organic compounds** in drinking water have been considered a severe threat to public health worldwide. In 2 wells, 140-1500 mcg/L of 1,4 dimethylphenol was detected, 2100 mcg/L of 2 methyl phenol. 1.4 dioxane was also found along with numerous metals and napthalene.

These statistics are available on the HB ASCON website. There are also tables on the cancer toxicity criteria for residents, cumulative cancer risk and residential exposure scenarios.

Water, soil contaminants do not seek permission to travel and all risks to human life must be taken into consideration.

**Rates**

San Diego has some of the Nation’s highest water rates, 200% more expensive than imported water at $2,725 an acre foot, with ever increasing ratepayer bills. Poseidon has been cited on 5 different occasions for violating their wastewater discharge permit and they have yet to begin mitigation. Poseidon’s promises to upgrade the intake and discharge have not been implemented and they constantly need to shut down because of red tides.

Vote to uphold the staff recommendation.