Community Action

What’s Happening in Bloomington?
How the local riders are fighting back.

Ontario Districting
Why these new districts hold so much power.

Introducing the new EJ Ambassadors
Local leaders taking the power back
Contents

04
From the Executive Director
A message from the executive director of CCAEJ, Ana Gonzales. Page 4

06
Ontario Districting
How CCAEJ fought, and drew the lines of power in the city of Ontario. Page 6

05
ISR
The development of the indirect source rule to help combat warehouse emissions in the inland region. Page 5

08
Scoping Plan Recap
A recap of the campaign for a strong California Air Resources Board 2022 scoping plan. Page 8
EJ Ambassadors
An Environmental Justice Ambassador Training Program empowering local leaders to make a difference. Page 10

Bloomington Cabalgata
A huge community action to save the city of Bloomington from being sold to the logistics industry. Page 18
The last quarter of 2022 was an exciting time for the Inland Valley communities in collaboration with the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ). Through various campaigns and policy advocacy efforts, CCAEJ was able to build community-based initiatives and create new leaders through their Community Action Teams (CATs) and Environmental Justice Ambassador Program.

From the redistricting campaign in the city of Ontario and Riverside to community base building in eight key cities in the Inland Valley, CCAEJ was able to advocate for health and inspire communities to advocate for themselves and their neighbors. CCAEJ in collaboration with CEJA’s Regenerate campaign, also helped pass the most stringent California Air Resources Board’s (CARB) Scoping Plan.

While advocating for progressive state and local policy changes to protect human health and the natural environment, CCAEJ launched the first Fall cohort of the Environmental Justice Ambassador Program. This program created a platform to empower individuals with knowledge and skills related to environmental justice and it provided community tools and resources to become advocates for their communities and speak up against injustices. The accomplishments of CCAEJ during this period were truly inspiring, the movement to combat environmental racism is growing stronger and we are ready to continue the fight to ensure a healthy, coexisting natural and social environment where we can all live, work and play.
In 2022, CCAEJ and other partners have continued our work around the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s (SCAQMD) Rule 2305 (also known as the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule) which was passed last year to address the air quality impacts of warehouses on our communities. This year, our work focused around identifying continued opportunities for advancing the ISR and using it with the many projects that continue to be proposed in the region.

In addition to the Warehouse ISR, we have also been working with our partners to advance ISRs for two other significant sources of pollution in communities, the ports and railyards. SCAQMD staff have held several meetings and workshops throughout the year to gather input from stakeholders, community-based organizations, and other interested parties on the best way to design and implement a legally defensible ISR—an extremely critical part as previous rules have been struck down in court—for those uses. In the new year, we will continue to work with the SCAQMD and other partners on developing the final rules that are strong enough to protect communities from continued injustice in the future.
What is Redistricting/Districting? “Every ten years, local governments use new census data to redraw their district lines to reflect how local populations have changed. Assembly Bill 849 (2019), also known as The Fair and Inclusive Redistricting for Municipalities and Political Subdivisions (FAIR MAPS) Act, requires cities and counties to engage communities in the redistricting process by holding public hearings and/or workshops and doing public outreach, including to non-English-speaking communities.” - California Secretary of State

In January 2022, CCAEJ in collaboration with the Brown and Black Redistricting Alliance, in which our Executive Director is the convener for SB County, began making connections with Ontario community members. During this time the Ontario Future Alliance began coming together organically to advocate against warehousing development in the south part of Ontario.

In March, 2022 CCAEJ + Brown and Black Redistricting Alliance and Ontario Future Alliance began conducting in-person community meetings in Ontario and via zoom. CCAEJ provided education workshops about what Community of Interest (COI’s) testimony was and the importance of providing testimony at the Public Hearing meetings.

In June 2022, Brown and Black Redistricting Alliance in collaboration with Lupe Camacho, a knowledgeable and experienced demographer created Map 10, which represented community of interest testimonies and voices from Ontario Latino, Black and Asian communities.

Melissa May, CCAEJ Ontario Community Organizer conducted over eight community meetings with different partners and Ontario residents, many of which remained engaged during an eight month period, a total of forty-one COI’s testimonies were received. During this time, the original map adoption that was intended to take place in July was halted due to pending litigation from an Ontario resident.
Between August and November, Brown and Black Redistricting Coalition joined forces with Fair Ontario and through pressure from plaintiff’s attorney, and many community member’s testimonies Map 17 was developed and unanimously adopted by the city council on November 1st, 2022 with a second reading on December 6th, 2022. Adopted resolution also included the sequence of first district elections beginning November 2024.

This is the second Redistricting/Districting victory for CCAEJ along with the Brown and Black Redistricting Coalition in San Bernardino County. Not only will Ontario be able to have representation based on the region of the city but opportunities to elect representatives that reflect the population of that community are now increased making sure no community is underserved and/or underrepresented.

This is also a huge victory for all communities because we have set a precedent and a model to create a fairer, more inclusive way to elevate community voices and create maps that reflect the community’s needs to create a social and natural environment where all people can thrive.

We are very proud of the community members who participated in this difficult and long process, cherish this victory!
In 2022 CCAEJ along side, the California Environmental Justice Alliance, and Regenerate, California Coalition launched the Our Climate Future campaign, which fought for one of the most progressive climate change initiatives ever to be drafted in California. It started when the California Air Resources Board (CARB) revisited Its 20 year climate change scoping plan. The original draft scoping plan was a terrible step in the wrong direction and fell way short of what we need in California. In response over 10,000 letters were sent to the California air resources board, Governor Newsom, and many other elected officials ranging from San Francisco all the way down to San Diego. Numerous rallies and actions in Sacramento continued to mount pressure on the CARB board and staff to change the scoping plan to a vision of the future beyond oil and gas. The final result was a scoping plan that stopped the expansion of dirty gas power plants while investing in offshore winds, doubles states targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled, and creating a multi agency process to coordinate fossil fuel phase out. This is a huge victory for environmental justice in California, and is a step in the right direction to secure our future with clean air. We acknowledge a positive shift in priorities by the carb board as they graciously came on a toxic tour of our community to see just what kind of an impact their scoping plan would have.

Though this is a big victory for our organization and our coalition partners, we need to stay vigilant, and make sure that the implementation of this plan is seen through and furthermore the transition to clean energy does not negatively impact are already marginalized EJ communities.

Thank you everyone who fought alongside us with every phone call, letter, and rally.
As a person of color, a parent of a child of the LGBTQ+ community and another child diagnosed with autism and unilateral hearing disorder, as well as being an educator for over 15 years, I have encountered and fought against numerous issues, social, economic and political that affect our families, our communities and the future generations that have yet to make their mark in society. Today our reality is overabundant with cries for social justice and the increase of equity and inclusion within the realms of political policies, social restructuring and economic stability. However, while it remains evident that the amount of work to be done is overwhelming, we are at a point where we can no longer sit idly by and ignore the environmental issues that we are currently facing globally, and locally as they are becoming increasingly catastrophic. I have lived in Southern California my entire life, and as I continue to see the physical landscape of my own communities here in the Inland Empire of Southern California and neighboring regions, I can no longer ignore the impacts created by those who would seek to exploit the environment with no caution given to the long term impacts of over industrialization and how the pollution created will plague and threaten the survival of future generations. For these reasons I felt an obligation as a member of the community to increase my understanding of the issues, and find where I fit into the solution. That is when the opportunity was provided by the Community Center for Action and Environmental Justice (CCAEJ) provided that opportunity with their Environmental Justice Ambassador Training Program.
Why an Ambassador Program?

The core message of the program was to help community members in unlocking their personal stories to advocate for the community, the Earth, in all areas of Environmental Justice. It became evident within the first two classes that many people from different neighborhoods and counties have all been impacted in some way, physically, mentally, and economically by the issues related to the environmental changes that have taken place in the region over the last 30 years. The program was focused on arming community members with the facts, and allowing them to walk away from the emotional baggage of the “myths” of climate change and the restraints that “prevent” the change, and in its place having the confidence to remain resilient in their battles.

The goal of the program was to ensure that even when belittled and attacked, the future Ambassadors would have gained enough knowledge, experience, and an action resource tool kit to provide within their own communities opportunities to share with others about how we can fix the situation. It has long been one of the goals of CCAEJ to increase the awareness within every community about the current tactics that have been used to silence those without power for far too long, with the understanding that knowledge and confidence is a game changer.

Who are the Ambassadors

When developing any curriculum it is critical to understand your audience. The class encompassed a very wide cross section of the Inland Empire community. The 30 participants represented cities throughout San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. With a demographic make-up that mirrors the people of both counties not only racially, but economically. The curriculum was scaffolded through differentiation strategies to engage educational levels that ranged from primary school to professional engineers and doctorates. The instruction and delivery of materials were provided primarily in English, but all lessons, discussions, and physical materials were translated...
into Spanish provided by a professional interpreter service agency that partnered with CCAEJ. The participants within the program represented backgrounds spanning three continents, and at least ten countries. The class makeup was also intersectional in that there were representative members of the LGBTQ+ communities and families of persons with disabilities, who expressed that this was their first experience getting to really hear and interact with members of many different communities on environmental issues.

The class was made up of individual experience in the areas of advocacy and environmental justice ranging from seasoned community organizers and leaders to very concerned individuals who want to do more for their community. This variation in experience was also evident in the level of previous knowledge amongst participants, as there were some who before this program had not previously believed in the actual climate science. Many of which have worked for the very companies that are leading the messages of “climate change is not real.” Overall, the class was a representation of all of us, and because the curriculum of the course reinforced the need for the provision and access to additional follow-up information, the greatest part of this class was that it continued to grow with each lesson as did its participants.
Why become an Environmental Justice Ambassador

This was the ongoing theme of the entire training course, despite being a topic that is very broad, deep in content and arguably touches on a lot of technical and debatable discussions. However, it became apparent very quickly as everyone around the room began the course by sharing their personal testimonies of what brought them to want to become an ambassador of Environmental Justice, the need for such a program was long overdue.

“The biggest misconception I come across when discussing the impact of environmental issues, is that they are a thing of the past. It is important that we continue to share the generational knowledge with our youth to ensure that we as a society end this cycle of creating the mindset that pollution is a problem for the future to solve. The future is here and the consequences of inaction are happening now.”

-Kevin Miramontes, EdD

For some of the participants, the issue was the over development of warehouses in their immediate neighborhoods where they found themselves being overwhelmed by truck traffic, and constant noise and air pollution created. For others the reality of over industrialization has created a number of health issues experienced by them or family members. Health issues such as the development of respiratory diseases, chronic nose-bleeds, and migraines. Whatever the reason, everyone was there with the intent of trying to do more for their community, but needed support in making their voices and concerns heard and the hopes of creating change for the better.
Summary of Classes

The instructors provided by CCAEJ were very knowledgeable and provided the information in a very concise and effective manner providing each participant with a more than adequate amount of information on environmental justice, energy management and production, to the legislative process of policy making, and finally best practices in organizing and leadership. What was most impressive was the attention to detail in connecting with the audience, being conscious of the diversity of education and cultural backgrounds of everyone in the room. The material, beyond being translated, was provided in a manner that was easily understood without being “dumbed-down” and was met with respect and dignity by everyone in the room. The other effective device used in this training series was the use of repetitive questioning where participants were asked to reflect on the material, adhering the overarching themes of each lesson. This was a great opportunity for individuals to share their experiences. It was within these discussions that many participants not only felt welcomed and acknowledged about what they and their communities were experiencing, but were also provided the opportunity to hear that other communities were having similar experiences, or were connected to participants that were able to offer help and solutions. Sharing personal stories was a common practice throughout the course, but more importantly was the single question centered around what brought them to join, “how comfortable do you feel discussing environmental issues?”

The discourse around, “What is Environmental Justice?” is a very broad concept, but the training course did a great job in aligning a discussion around defining it by examining how it relates to quality of life and equity across different communities. In this series we examined the environment and the sum total of physical, biological and chemical environments and the impact of each as well as collectively on the life processes and systems experienced by individuals and communities from conception to death. On this topic, it was discussed the importance of green spaces and the equitable attainment of green spaces in diverse communities. A discussion that raised the question as to what is the ideal balance of industrial, commercial, and man generated spaces versus green spaces.

The second class covered pollution sources, impacts and solutions where we covered the many different types of pollution, EPA criteria air pollutants, what is thermal inversion and how it is affecting the Inland Empire. It was also discussed the health impacts of pollutants and what that means for future generations. A topic that as a parent was very concerning, considering that adverse effects the increase of pollutants will have on a children’s health and development. In this same class we discussed local water quality and legislation covering the Clean Air Act. The class was also provided with information that is available publicly online where any individual with internet access can track and monitor pollution in their own regions using a tool called, CalEnviroScreen 4.0.
The next few classes were deep discussions about the need for the decentralization of energy and the development of energy democracies that promote sustainable practices of producing and managing energy, but also equitable redistribution of political and economic power toward a shared benefit among communities, the expansion of public participation and energy-related policy making. Again, we discussed the energy-environment balance, but was most impactful was the discussion regarding energy science versus profit strategy. A topic found in many documentaries such as Dark Waters, a 2019 film about the lawyer who took DuPont to court regarding water pollution, or The Power of Big Oil (2022), a PBS three-part documentary which investigates the decades-long failure to confront the threat of climate change and the role of the fossil fuel industry.

These two classes were a deep reflection into every participant’s previous and current understanding of what they understand about the infrastructure and how energy is created and managed, but more importantly how much of that understanding is controlled by the media and who funds the information that is released to the general public. The discussion here was based upon public dependency on privatization of utilities by way of cultural conditioning and misinformation. A deep conversation to have, but reaffirmed the objective that we as future EJ Ambassadors have a duty to pass this information onto others in our communities.

The last two classes focused on supporting the veteran, but also all the newcomers to the environmental justice battle felt included and empowered, and that was on the topic of civic engagement. This was more of an exercise than a lecture, where participants were asked to examine their current level of civic engagement. Each person was asked to identify who the current public officials are ranging from federal and state representatives, to local public officials such as county supervisors, school board members, utilities officers, and other community groups. This was helpful to the group at large, as many knew of some, but not all, and in sharing, others were able to piece together the missing parts of the political puzzle in their own region. In that same lesson, participants were tasked with a self-analysis of their own voter engagement, rating themselves from simply being a registered voter, to a super power voter. The difference being that one is simply registered and sometimes votes, to the other which realizes that the only way change and progress can occur is if they run for office.

Lastly, the class ended with a discussion of how to create a long term strategy using the Wellstone Triangle, a strategy that examines leadership through the triad of progressive public policy, grassroots electoral politics and community/issue organization. This model was used to explain and demonstrate how individuals and community groups can take steps to escalate community concerns within the scope of electoral politics engagement. A plan that was sought after by many in the program who had over the course of the six classes, voiced feeling powerless when confronted with political silence, or denied a response by the leaders they trusted to protect them.
Next Steps

After the conclusion of the training series, a celebration was held for the completion of the program by the participants. What started with 13 students, the program had built its participant level up to 30 by the end. It was conveyed in the testimonials of many of the participants that as they went through the program, they thought of others in their communities that would benefit from the sharing of knowledge and power, and so invited them and brought them along. They are now a community within the community of EJ advocates that will go forward and continue to spread the message of how important this work of gaining equitable representation in policy making and energy management is for the sustainability and survival of future generations.

Programs such as the ambassador program are so important, more now than ever. What was witnessed in each session was not only the sharing of knowledge regarding energy practices, how pollution is affecting the population, or strategies for changing policies, but the testimonies of each participant. Each person, including the instructors had a personal story to share of how environmental issues have and continue to impact our communities, our families, our children. It was so powerful to see the exchange occur between such a diverse group of people. It was also powerful to see the exchange of information and history between generations. Rene Miramontes, age 13, not too long after completing the ambassador series, spoke out at a local city council meeting in opposition against the development of a warehouse in an area that has historically been used for farming. A location that has always been known to the community as a place for teaching the lessons of farming and food sustainability to young children groups such as girl scouts and local public schools.

Lucasorion, age 9, had mentioned that he feels it is important that he start a club at school where he can share with his friends the importance of protecting the land and its resources, as his fear lies in the reality that this area may become inhabitable in his near future.
For the 30 community members who completed the environmental justice ambassador program was the mission they shared when leaving on that final day, to find a way to spread information and fight on our own terms. The reality that all of us are needed to fight this fight, and what was learned was that as community members to find your own way to be a part of the solution. Not everyone can attend every city council meeting, or hold public office, some are needed and effective in other ways. Some excel at doing the research needed to support others who are effective at sharing information. Others are effective at organizing events and meetings, being the person that reaches out and converses with local developers, politicians, decision makers within our own communities to share and bring back information. People to write letters to local publications and universities in efforts to expand the awareness of environmental issues that are taking place in local cities and counties. It is up to everyone to expand the environmental justice community to extend beyond CCAEJ, or the Inland Empire, and even the ambassador program itself. This fight affects everyone, everywhere, and that is what it will take to make the change that is needed to protect the lives of future generations who will inherit the world that we leave behind.

THANK YOU
AMBASSADORS
CCAЕJ STAFF & BOARD
COMMUNITY MEMBERS LIKE YOU!
By Jovanny Aguilera, Organizer CCAEJ

To start, we would like to extend our gratuity to all our community and partners who helped make this event possible. Without their help, this event would have not been possible. This event occurred in the small rural town of Bloomington, CA, on November 27th, 2022, at the Equestrian Sports Recreational Park. The idea came from some of the leaders out at the Mira Loma who have been supporting us with this movement and event because of the similarities that both communities face. We chose a cabalgata and not a traditional march to include the Bloomington equestrian and agricultural life that the people of Bloomington live. It was a great way to include a diverse population and had many coming out to fight for a similar cause. As the leader pulled a trailer of local Bloomington Banda, the march began following people on foot and horses following behind. With more than 100 people marching, the Bloomington community took to Cedar, one of Bloomington's main streets. Bloomington sheriffs coordinated and directed traffic, redirecting traffic and blocking off streets. The people’s chants and music of the Banda could be heard for blocks ahead as curious neighbors began to come outside, some recording, and business owners taking an interest. Some started to chant and join in on the march, and some offered water and snacks for the tired marchers. Bloomington’s community made its presence known, and we doubled our size since the last event we had in October. After the march, community members joined us at the Equestrian park for some food, live music, and motivational speaking/tactics to fight against the warehouses that burden this community. The event was a hit as we showcased artwork, collected donations, and celebrated Bloomington’s culture.