

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN
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Public Health Directive

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) started receiving complaints from the residents in the Southeast Los Angeles County region about metallic odors in 2013. Since the SCAQMD is the air pollution control agency for urban portions of Los Angeles County, these complaints were investigated. In October 2016, it was found that hexavalent chromium, a known carcinogen, was being emitted at unsafe levels by certain facilities in the surrounding region.

Since October 2016, SCAQMD Hearing Board has issued Orders of Abatement for three businesses that were emitting high levels of hexavalent chromium. If any of these facilities exceed the limits specified in the Orders of Abatement, they must temporarily shut-down chromium-emitting processes. SCAQMD has also been working with the Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County Fire Department, and other related governmental agencies to address the elevated levels of hexavalent chromium in the region. SCAQMD and their partners have been collecting data on hexavalent chromium throughout the region, holding regularly scheduled public hearings and public calls, and testing for hexavalent

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chromium levels in the soil and in homes. However, the levels of hexavalent chromium in the surrounding region remain significantly higher than in other parts of Los Angeles County.

Facilities that emit chemicals and other toxic substances can pose serious public health threats. The LA County Department of Public Health (DPH) has issued seven public health directives to metal processing companies in the cities of Paramount and Long Beach for emitting high levels of hexavalent chromium. However, DPH currently does not have the regulatory authority to limit or stop these companies from continuing to release hazardous substances into the surrounding neighborhoods.

DPH is tasked with the responsibility to protect the public's health, and as the Local Health Officer, has authority under State law to assess, investigate, and shut down restaurants or food facilities when they present a serious public health hazard. DPH should be given similar authority to prevent chemicals from poisoning our communities. The County should evaluate the enforcement authority of Public Health Directives to limit or prevent facilities from releasing hazardous substances and toxic air emissions that pose a threat to the health of Los Angeles County residents.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct County Counsel to work with the Department of Public Health and other involved county departments including the Los Angeles County Fire Department, to determine the feasibility of strengthening the enforcement authority of Public Health Directives, including, but not limited to, the power to shut down facilities that emit hazardous substances that have been found to threaten the public's health and/or welfare and determine the processes necessary to implement this authority, and report back in 90 days.

JH;jh