



January 30, 2015

Mr. Michael Rodriguez
Executive Director
ENLACE

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

On behalf of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization we would like to share with you our concerns with the Proposed Unilever Expansion Project. LVEJO was able to participate in the Wed. Jan. 14th Meeting at Central States SER, sponsored by Enlace and the 26th & Kostner Community Oversight Council. We have attached the notes we received from that meeting for your review. Based on both the meeting and notes we have established the following questions and concerns:

One of the biggest concerns of the proposed project is the impact to air quality. At the meeting we heard from Unilever that “truck traffic would increase by 15 diesel trucks an hour”. Although the notes below state that the trucks would head out west on 26th Street towards Cicero; this is a serious air quality issue that will impact the schools and surrounding community. With Zapata Elementary serving close to 1,000 students and the local area heavily populated to the east, both indoor and outdoor air quality are a concern.

We would request that Unilever provide a traffic study of 26th Street and the Industrial Road they plan to use, including any idling, delivery, pick-ups and other scenarios where the trucks will be running during any operational hours. The hours the children are in school in particular are of greatest concern along with evening hours when much of the community is home to the east of the proposed site.

Additionally, LVEJO would request a base line air quality study be conducted to understand the current levels locally along with estimations, provided by Unilever, which can be shared with the community to understand how they will be impacted potentially by the increased truck traffic. We would request that the study be inclusive of cumulative impact to ensure that other air emissions are included. Zapata could possibly incur a cost of adding better ventilation systems to alleviate the increased diesel emissions. This would not take into account the air quality during arrival and departure or recess. We would request Unilever consider as there proposal retro-fitted/zero emissions diesel trucks to help mitigate air quality issues.

Unilever and/or Enlace should provide concrete analysis on the Zoning Change being proposed from C2 to M1. As an Environmental Justice community, this zoning change cannot simply be evaluated by the current measures. As we have learned from the Metal Shredding siting in Pilsen near Juarez, zoning can play a detrimental part when an Environmental Justice lens is not applied.



LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION
LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE JUSTICIA AMBIENTAL DE LA VILLITA

LVEJO is supportive of the communities request for living wage and union jobs to be provided for the community at large.

LVEJO has also attached a General Information Sheet on Diesel and other related information. Please contact us at your earliest convenience with any questions or concerns.

Please note that we will be sharing this letter with Unilever, Enlace, the City of Chicago, Alderman Munoz, the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, Universidad Popular, Zapata Elementary School and the Community.

On behalf of LVEJO we welcome the opportunity to work with you and the community to ensure a just environment in Little Village. We thank you in advance for your time and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wasserman

Kimberly Wasserman
Director of Organizing and Strategy
LVEJO



General Information:

Diesel engines are a major source of fine-particle pollution. The elderly and people with emphysema, asthma, and chronic heart and lung disease are especially sensitive to fine-particle pollution. Numerous studies have linked elevated particle levels in the air to increased hospital admissions, emergency room visits, asthma attacks and premature deaths among those suffering from respiratory problems. Because children's lungs and respiratory systems are still developing, they are also more susceptible than healthy adults to fine particles. Exposure to fine particles is associated with increased frequency of childhood illnesses and can also reduce lung function in children.

Like all fuel-burning equipment, diesel engines produce nitrogen oxides, a common air pollutant in Chicago. Nitrogen oxides can damage lung tissue, lower the body's resistance to respiratory infection and worsen chronic lung diseases, such as asthma. They also react with other pollutants in the atmosphere to form ozone, a major component of smog.

I have added a link to the Clean Air Task Force for more information on Diesel Emissions and a link to the results of Diesel Emissions in Cook County:

http://www.catf.us/methane/black_carbon/diesel/problems/

http://www.catf.us/methane/black_carbon/diesel/dieselhealth/county.php?site=0&c

C2 - Motor Vehicle-Related Commercial District: Shopping centers. Allows more business types than B1 districts, including liquor stores, warehouses, and auto shops. Apartment allowed above the ground floor.

M1 - Limited Manufacturing/Business Park District: Light manufacturing, warehouses, and wholesalers.

Quoted Enlace Notes:

Site plans: They are planning to expand their current facilities, which are located at 28th St., west of Kilbourn. They currently produce mayonnaise at that facility, but do not have a storage and distribution site. They are planning to add a production line and a distribution warehouse north of their current site along the railroad tracks. They have plans to expand that facility to the east. They are planning to donate 3 acres along Kostner from 26th to 27th as community space, which could likely be used as green space or school expansion.

Traffic: Trucks currently come from 31st St. because they have to enter 28th from Kostner. This new facility would add a service road that would extend Kilbourn to 26th Street. Trucks would enter and exit near the railroad tracks on 26th and head toward Cicero, alleviating truck traffic in the residential area surrounding the facility.

It is now zoned C2, and they would need a change to M1. Because the site is over 2 acres, they would then have to present a PD (planned development) sponsored by the Alderman to the Planning Commission in March. The Alderman would then bring the project for a City Council vote in April.