Health Risks

- Health Risk Assessments (HRA) on 18 rail yards in California have demonstrated that living near a rail yard, a large diesel emission source, poses a significant public health risk resulting from exposure to diesel particulate matter (PM). The Air Resource Board identified diesel particulate matter (PM) as a toxic air contaminant based on its potential to cause cancer and other adverse health problems, including respiratory illnesses and increased risk of heart disease.

- The HRAs found that in total, these rail yards are responsible for 210 tons of diesel pollution a year and put more than 3 million people at risk of cancer. Five of these rail yards pose an excessive individual cancer risk of 500-2,500 chances per million, well beyond the level EPA considers acceptable.

- Nationally, diesel exhaust poses a cancer risk that is 7.5 times higher than the combined total cancer risk.

- Because of their very small size, diesel PM particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, carrying with them an array of toxins. Exposure to diesel PM is a health hazard, particularly to children, whose lungs are still developing; and the elderly, who may have other serious health problems.

- Breathing in diesel exhaust contributes to cancer, asthma, heart disease, premature birth, increased school absence, and other health problems.

What you can do

1. Join EYCEJ at the California Air Resource Board hearing in Diamond Bar on September 25th
2. Contact your legislators and tell them that the health risks from these emission sources are unacceptable and request their presence at the hearing
3. Sign a post-card
4. Learn More! Visit www.eycej.org to find a list of upcoming events, trainings, and workshops
What do California Residents Need?

- Since the release of the HRAs, mitigation plans have been developed and vetted throughout the communities. These mitigation plans are inadequate and will not achieve the reductions necessary to protect the public’s health.
- More emission reductions that will benefit the environment, clean the air, reduce cancer and other health risks.
- Adoption of rules, regulations and guidelines that focus on health risk reductions that include site-specific measures.
- Health protective buffers between sensitive receptors / residential areas and rail yard facilities.
- “No Idle” Zones for locomotives near schools, parks & residential areas.
- Enforcement of the use of alternative fuel for locomotives & other emission source equipment and use new technology.

Proposed Recommendations

1. Repower older switch and medium horsepower locomotives
2. Retrofit switch and medium horsepower locomotives with after-treatment devices
3. Accelerate the Introduction of Tier 4 Interstate Line Haul Locomotives

Will these recommendations be enough to reduce diesel emission reduction to levels that are health protective that California residents deserve?

Long term emission reductions:
- Under the California Health and Safety Code, ARB is required to reduce all possible mobile source emissions to comply with state and federal air quality standards unless preempted by federal law.
- When faced with a public health concern of this magnitude, ARB has a moral obligation to identify every possible health risk reduction.
- Public health benefits from reducing exposure and diesel pollution levels should be part of the measures of the equation for the feasibility analysis.

What’s Next?

Upcoming Meetings

Urge the Air Resource Board to pass regulations that address locomotive and rail yard pollution. Send a letter or call:

Air Resources Board
1001 “I” Street
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812
916.322.5840