



CEHAJ is a coalition of organizations, associations and community groups working to achieve environmental justice, improving air quality, community health and overall quality of life for residents living in the I-710 corridor in Southern California. CEHAJ is committed to ensuring the right of community residents to be part of the decision making process as it relates to proposed expansion projects for the I-710 freeway.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **RESIDENTS NEAR I-710 ORGANIZE COMMUNITY FESTIVAL TO VOICE CONCERNS ABOUT FREEWAY EXPANSION PROJECT**

**Wednesday, August 8, 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM**  
**Silverado Park, 1545 W. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Long Beach**

LOS ANGELES—During a public hearing in Long Beach, community members will voice concerns over the proposed freeway expansion—known as the I-710 Corridor Project—outside the hearing doors at their *On Our Own Terms Community Festival*. The California Department of Public Transportation (CalTrans) contends that the freeway expansion of up to ten general purpose lanes and a dedicated freight corridor will improve air quality, but residents, air regulators, and public health experts are skeptical.

In June 2012, the CalTrans released a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) assessing six alternatives for a proposed 18-mile freeway expansion along the I-710 Corridor. The study area encompasses 17 cities and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County including Bell, Bell Gardens, Boyle Heights, Carson, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Downey, East Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Lakewood, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Paramount, Signal Hill, South Gate, Vernon, and Wilmington/San Pedro. The Draft EIR claims that the project will decrease air pollution along the study area, but community members and public health advocates believe that increasing the efficiency of public transit, walking and biking along the I-710 corridor are better solutions to the region's congestion and air quality problems.

“Experience and research on induced traffic suggests that if we expand a roadway to relieve traffic, more drivers will fill the new ‘non-congested’ space, leading to an increase in emissions. Efforts to improve air quality can go only so far if they seek to accommodate an increase in driving and trucking, and fail to incorporate an opportunity to move commuters to less fossil fuel intense modes of transportation,” said Dr. Felix Nuñez, a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles and a board certified Family Physician and Chief Medical Officer of the Family Health Care Centers of Greater Los Angeles.

For more than 10 years, public health experts, community-based organizations and residents, all members of the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ) have engaged in the I-710 Corridor Project to ensure that the project does not result harm the health of communities adjacent to the project.

CEHAJ organized the On Our Own Terms Community Festival because they were frustrated that Caltrans was not taking community concerns seriously. Although CEHAJ successfully advocated for a Health Impact Assessment to CEHAJ successfully advocated for a [Health Impact Assessment \(HIA\)](#) to be conducted on the I-710 Corridor project to better assess the project's impact on health, Caltrans failed to include the analysis from the HIA in the over 10,000 page Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

The *On Our Own Terms Community Festival* will highlight the community's demands for the I-710 Corridor project—that Caltrans not expand the general purpose lanes and instead include provisions to encourage zero-emission truck technology and invest in public transit. The event will include activities, such as a bike repair workshop, zumba lessons, yoga, and non-toxic cleaning product demonstration, to showcase a vision for a healthier community.

“Often, families and community members are discouraged from participating in long public hearings. We organized the festival so that while community members wait to give testimony, they can celebrate an alternative vision for a healthy community,” said Isella Ramirez, Co-Director of East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and a member of CEHAJ. During the community festival, residents will voice their concerns about freeway expansion at the I-710 Corridor Project public hearing. For more information on the public hearing, visit [Metro's website](#).

CEHAJ members are also requesting an extension to the DEIR review period. “The Draft EIR document is thousands of pages long and the public has only 60 days to review the document. As a busy physician, I'm concerned about the project, and this is not enough time for me to adequately review the data” said Dr. Roberta Kato, Pediatric Pulmonologist and member of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles. “This project has been in development over the past decade and has the potential to affect the regional economy, communities, and public health for decades to come. Why are we rushing this critical period for public comment?”

The Festival is organized by the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ) and the Long Beach Building Healthy Communities Air Quality Work Group. CEHAJ member organizations include the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma (LBACA), East Yard, Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ), Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Coalition for Clean Air (CCA), and Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC).

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