

# BROAD ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION RELEASES DECLARATION AGAINST CARBON TRADING AND OFFSET USE TO ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING IN CALIFORNIA

## Coalition launches campaign to oppose carbon trading in California

MEDIA CONTACT FOR:

**San Diego:** Leo Miras 619-474-0220 office

**Los Angeles:** Angela Johnson Meszaros 323-229-1145 cell

**Fresno:** Carolina Simunovic 559-485-1416 office (559-349-3632 cell)

**Oakland:** Anna Yun Lee 510- 302-0430 x20

**Sacramento and For General Questions:** Naomi Kim 541-513-0540 cell or [naomik@envirorights.org](mailto:naomik@envirorights.org)

---

**EMBARGOED UNTIL – 2/19/08 – 10:00 AM**

---

**LOS ANGELES, SACRAMENTO, SAN DIEGO, FRESNO, BAY AREA, CA (Feb. 19, 2008) --**

Environmental Justice (EJ) advocates announced today the release of the *California Environmental Justice Movement's Declaration Against Use of Carbon Trading Schemes to Address Climate Change*. The Declaration details the environmental justice movement's opposition to the use of carbon trading and global offsets. "A cap & trade program will not achieve actual greenhouse gas emissions reductions in time. Period. It's a charade to continue business as usual," said Angela Johnson Meszaros with the California Environmental Rights Alliance (CERA). The EJ advocates gathered at 5 locations across California for a teleconference to share their critique of carbon trading and to propose alternatives.

The EJ advocates cited the failure of these pollution trading schemes to achieve actual emissions reductions, and were joined by internationally known environmental expert, Larry Lohman from the United Kingdom. He stated, "The experience from Europe's [Emissions Trading Scheme] has been a well-documented disaster. Emissions actually increased, the worst polluters were given the largest windfall profits in record, energy costs for consumers increased, and the use of global 'offsets' funded oppressive projects the world over. The U.S. should really learn from Europe's mistakes, not copy them." Lohman is a founder of the international Durban Group and editor of *Carbon Trading: A Critical Conversation on Climate Change, Privatisation and Power*.

"Fossil Fuel Industries and a few environmental groups would have us believe that trading in pollution is the only 'politically viable' approach climate change. It is no wonder that the largest polluters are standing in line to collect enormous profits for free from this new 'market,' stated Jane Williams of California Communities Against Toxics. Ms. Williams went on to say "our actions will be judged not by the profits we made for polluters, but by how much pollution we reduced." Naomi Kim, also with CERA added, "Pollution trading programs will suppress the technological innovation needed for a genuine transition to clean energy sources. Companies will sit on the sidelines speculating about the future price of carbon instead of making the investments needed to fundamentally change how we produce and use energy. We only have 10 years to act."

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION RELEASES DECLARATION AGAINST CARBON TRADING

Bill Gallegos of Communities for a Better Environment stated, “We are at a cross-roads. We can invest in a clean energy future, OR we can condemn the planet staying chained to a hopeless fossil fuel future... Pollution trading schemes are undemocratic because these decisions are made in corporate boardrooms with no public participation or government oversight.”

Other coalition members raised irreconcilable problems with trading experiments and offset use. Diane Takvorian of Environmental Health Coalition questioned the asserted need for flexibility by industries as “escape routes to buy their way out of being regulated, and continue business as usual at the oil-fired power plants and ports in San Diego and similar facilities in communities throughout the state.” The group cited the examples of financial incentives for fraud and gaming the system within pollution trading markets of “Enron-style” proportion. Emissions reductions could be on paper, and not be “real and permanent” as required under AB32. “Pollution trading allows us to treat clean air as a private commodity to be traded, speculated against, and profited from. We owe future generations clean air and a healthy environment, making pollution profitable is a prescription for disaster,” said, Martha Arguello of Physicians for Social Responsibility- Los Angeles.

The coalition called for policies that directly and significantly reduce emissions, and focus on moving the state away from the fossil fuel infrastructure because such fuels are the overwhelming contributor to climate change and have devastating impacts on the poor and communities of color in California and around the world. Dr. Henry Clark of the West County Toxics Coalition explained, “Our people are sick and dying from the refineries. Trading schemes knowingly concentrate pollution exacerbating existing ‘hot spots’ in our communities of color. You can’t buy us off with promises of parks and asthma education programs, and then somehow think we’ll be ok with subjecting our children to increased cancer risk.”

The EJ Coalition urges others to join their movement in demanding that California reject the fundamentally flawed trading and offsets approach, and instead adopt energy efficiency policies, promote zero-carbon cars, and calls on the Legislature to adopt and the Governor to sign an increased Renewable Portfolio Standard bill. The coalition also supports the use of consistent carbon pricing mechanisms, such as a mitigating effects carbon fee, to achieve actual reductions and a genuine transition to a clean energy economy. “Such a transition could bring about numerous opportunities; economic benefits, green job creation, and healthier communities in the fight against climate change,” stated Jose Carmona, a clean energy advocate. Instead, Carolina Simunovic of Fresno Metro Ministries pointed out “we’re wasting incredible amounts of time and resources trying to re-design a failed carbon trading system.”

To download the full text of the declaration, to access a full press packet about the teleconference or obtain a recording, and for other information about the failures of pollution trading, offset use, and need for carbon fees, visit the coalition’s new website at <http://www.ejmatters.org>