



Cully Association of Neighbors



Dear Governor Brown,

The Cully Association of Neighbors (CAN) seeks to enhance the livability of our neighborhood. Living Cully strives to create a thriving neighborhood where investments are by and for the people who live here, primarily low income people and people of color. We were alarmed, as many Portlanders have been, to learn of the high concentration of heavy metals in the air in North and Southeast Portland. We are not, however, surprised to learn in more detail how unhealthy Portland air is to breathe. We have known for many years that our air is unhealthy to breathe because of our lived experience dealing with noxious odors from industry and toxic fumes due to the steady flow of truck traffic through our neighborhood.

The Department of Environmental Quality has likewise known that the air in Cully is unhealthy. The DEQ-led Portland Air Toxics Solutions process identified Cully as an area with particularly high concentrations of air toxics. The neighborhood's proximity to industrial sources, truck and rail traffic, and emissions from the Port of Portland puts Cully squarely in a hot zone of toxic air emissions. DEQ, it should be noted, has made no effort to act on their findings or taken any action that would reduce toxic air emissions, despite having the authority to do so.

The US Forest Service moss study has revealed the presence of an arsenic hotspot in the Cully neighborhood, adding toxins to an area already at risk. A neighborhood-led investigation revealed that as in Southeast and North Portland the center of the arsenic hotspot is an art glass manufacturer, Glass Alchemy, at 5785 NE Columbia Boulevard. Although we cannot be certain that this facility is the source of emissions, we can reasonably assume that this source needs to be further investigated. We are asking that the State take the following steps:

1. Begin immediate air quality monitoring in Cully to verify airborne concentrations of arsenic and other hazardous air pollutants that were identified in the moss study. Native American Youth and Family Center located on Columbia Boulevard in close proximity to Glass Alchemy, has offered to host air quality monitoring equipment and supply power to the equipment.
2. Investigate and ask Glass Alchemy to voluntarily suspend use of arsenic and other heavy metals. If voluntary measures are not agreed to, we ask that DEQ implement mandatory strategies to suspend heavy metal use at this facility and any other industrial facility that may be contributing heavy metals to the air, until pollution controls are installed and verified as effective.
3. Begin soil testing at schools and community gardens near the arsenic hot zone.
4. Make medical testing available for low income residents who are in the arsenic hot zone.
5. Make all data available to the public as it becomes available.
6. Inform Cully residents of the potential risks to public health by hosting an informational meeting for Cully residents. We ask that you provide funds for translation in Spanish and Somali, in addition to providing food and childcare, to maximize the ability of Cully's immigrant and refugee community to participate. CAN will secure a location for the meeting.
7. Use existing DEQ authority to adopt health based permitting rules for all area sources. Include in the rules special consideration for areas directly adjacent to large concentrations of small emitters to ensure that collective impacts from all emitters in a given area do not exceed health benchmarks.

8. Implement rules and strategies that will reduce ambient concentrations of air toxics to below health benchmark levels.
9. Provide CAN a timeline of how and when these steps will be implemented.
10. State and interstate highways bisect Cully and large amounts of freight traffic from Port and Industrial facilities contribute disproportionate amounts of diesel PM into the neighborhood. We ask that you work with legislature to set a statewide diesel standard in the 2017 legislative session.

Cully is the State's most diverse neighborhood, and we have endured unreasonably unhealthy air for too long. The time for study is over. What we expect now from the state is action. The need for action is underscored by the fact that here in Cully addressing pollution is not just a matter of environmental safety, it is a matter of racial justice. The residents most at risk from airborne toxins are communities of color and low income residents. We ask that DEQ take action, we ask that the State protect the health of Cully residents. Breathing is not a choice. Action by the state should not be either.

Sincerely,



Tristan Markwell, Chair
Cully Association of Neighbors

Sincerely,



Tony DeFalco
Living Cully Coordinator

CC: Interim Director Joni Hammond (DEQ),
Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Representative Earl Blumenauer
Mayor Charlie Hales
Chair Deborah Kafoury
Commissioner Loretta Smith
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Steve Novick
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Commissioner Nick Fish
Speaker Tina Kotek
Representative Lew Frederick
Representative Barbara Smith Warner
Senator Michael Dembrow
Senator Chip Shields