

June 2021 Environmental Committee Quarterly Report
By Andrea Gordon

Some current events combined with some of our local history, to create some context for our area.

SB 575 authored by Senator Maria Elena Durazo, et al, which was supported by HHIA & the Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier & Avocado Heights and many neighboring organizations and local residents, failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. SB 575 would have changed the manner in which the state Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) calculates the Violation Scoring Procedure (VSP) for permit renewal/revocation/facility or operation expansion. The change would have provided a more accurate measurement reflecting danger to the nearby community.

Some of our local area residents are concerned about the progress with the Exide lead battery processing plant due to the damage to those nearby, health concerns because of the known dangers of certain toxic substances and their concerns about a similar type of plant in our area. The state Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued the Exide Residential Cleanup & Investigation Progress report as of July 2, 2021. Total of 2710 parcels cleaned; in process, permission to clean up 395, cleanup preparation 159, and cleanup scheduled 98. On May 17th, the Governor proposed an additional \$454 million to complete the Exide battery recycling plant cleanup, however, budget finalization is due 7/1/2021 for fiscal year 2021/2022.

SB 467 (Weiner) would have eventually banned fracking in California and created a 2500 feet setback for oil and gas wells. It failed in the Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee. Our local hills, mostly preserved now as a wildlife habitat & recreational area were once operating oil fields in many areas. There is still an operating fracking site on a residential street on the Whittier side of our hills. Many years ago it experienced an explosion that killed & injured workers, caught the oil and gas on fire, took about a week to extinguish and endangered the hills and the neighbors. More recently there was an attempt to lease approximately 1200+ acres of the conserved land to an oil company to build a 10+ acre oil & gas processing plant and to utilize fracking to extract the oil and gas from the hills. Your neighbors came together, fought for years to prevent that lease agreement, and eventually filed a law suit to stop it. Ultimately, the county sued, the state sued & other environmental groups sued. Finally, it would appear that our hills and wildlife are safe. But it has been an ongoing issue that keeps returning, for which we all need to remain vigilant.

LA County Regional Planning recently reached out to select grassroots community-sponsored environmental groups in selected/targeted areas to participate in county-sponsored outreach/education meetings on subjects such as sustainability, climate change, heat warnings, drought/water issues, heat & air quality advisories, wildfires, etc. Regional Planning will be hosting the next virtual meeting in this area on July 20, 2021.