

Environmental Report: December 17, 2018

Submitted by: Joan Licari, Environmental Committee Chair

Quemetco:

Important Meeting: Tues. Dec. 18, 2018 at the Hacienda Heights Community Center—6:30-8:30 p.m.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is sponsoring a community forum update concerning the permit requests for the continued operation and expansion of the plant. It is not known by HHIA or the Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights whether the results of the soil tests performed in 2016 will be revealed. All interested residents should attend.

Since the last monthly report, HHIA has learned that the Office of the County Council of Los Angeles County has submitted a letter dated October 25, 2018 to the South Coast Air Quality Management District opposing the 25% increase in throughput by Quemetco. In their letter it is stated:

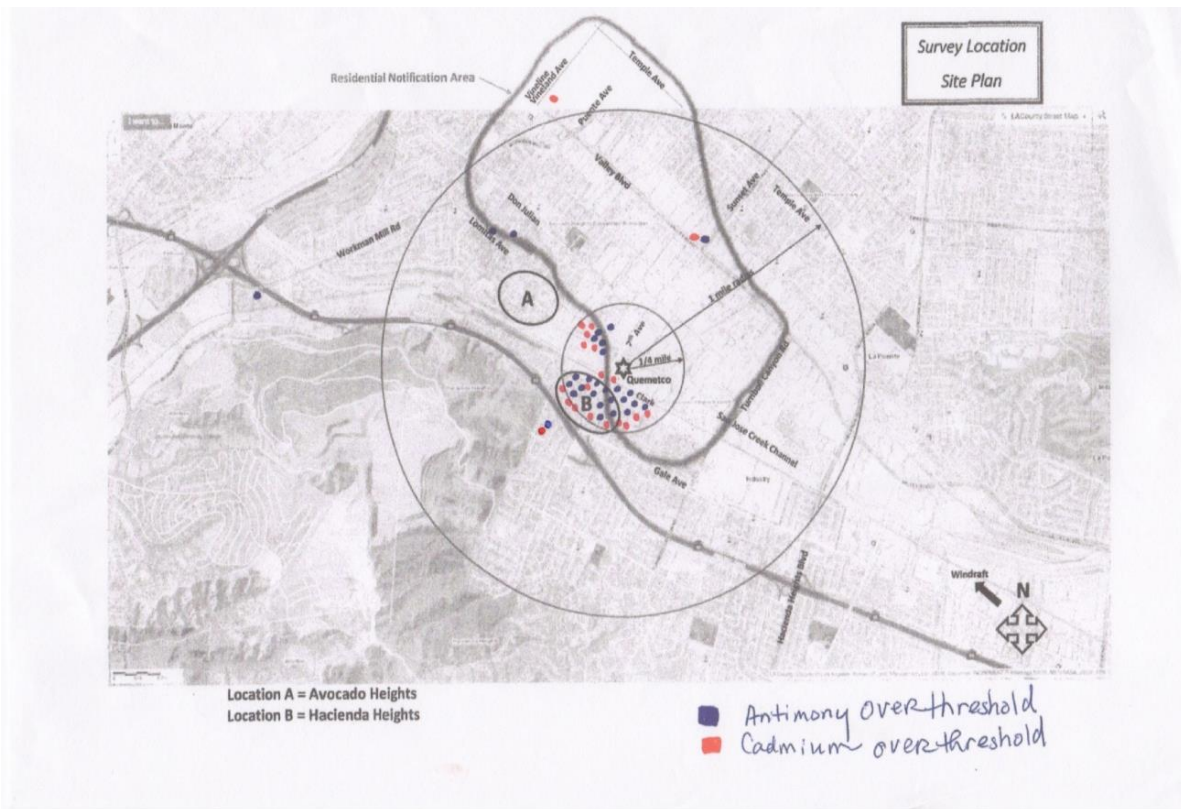
“The County Opposes the Project Because it Will Increase Pollution in Already Overburdened Nearby Communities and Because Regulators Have Not Sufficiently Investigated Historic Environmental Impacts From Quemetco.”

In their letter they also cite concerns of the Departments of Public Works, Public Health, the Fire Department’s Health Hazardous Materials Division, and the County Sanitation District’s Industrial Waste Section. They note that Quemetco has received four Notices of Violations since July 2017, including 3 in 2018 that had not been resolved at the date of the letter. They are opposing the Project “because it will increase hazardous waste, air pollution, including lead and arsenic emissions, water quality issues, traffic and public health impacts in a community is already at risk. As the community near the facility is identified by CalEPA as a “Disadvantaged Community...allowing additional hazardous waste and pollution into the community raises serious environmental justice concerns”. They also indicated that the Initial Study was inadequate in evaluating the potential impacts using the checklist of CEQA.

In other developments, Ian Calderon, California Speaker of the Assembly and Hacienda Heights Assemblyman, submitted a letter opposing consideration of a 25% increase until alleged violations in the lawsuit submitted by the Attorney General of California are addressed. As indicated in the November HHIA Environmental report, the Attorney General Becerra, has sued Quemetco on behalf of DTSC for 29 violations and indicate possible fines for continued violations. In addition, Janice Hahn, Supervisor for the 4th Supervisorial District that includes Hacienda Heights, has also submitted a letter in opposition to the increase.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District will also discuss the permit issue at their meeting on Jan. 4, 2019 at the District Office in Diamond Bar at 21865 Copley Drive - Diamond Bar, CA 91765. This meeting will begin at 9 a.m.

Results of the soil tests conducted by USC Division of Environmental Health in 2016, separately from those of DTSC, have been made public. Fifty-four samples were collected in-situ from residential and public properties within a one-mile radius of Quemetco. 189 samples were collected by residents using a protocol indicated by USC. Of those, 22 were excluded from analysis of non-lead metals due to machine errors. Below are some results of these investigations.



Metal	Symbol	"Safe" Residential Soil Level (ppm)	Levels detected (ppm)		
			Average	Minimum	Maximum
Antimony	Sb	30	172	27	848
Arsenic	As	0.07	17	7	48
Cadmium	Cd	1.7	68	14	220
Lead	Pb	80	117	13	2427

USC is planning to conduct further testing perhaps beginning in January.