

Mountain View Coalition

Mountain View Neighborhood Association • Mountain View Community Action •
Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge



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ABQ-BernCo Air Quality Control Board Votes Unanimously to Hold a Public Hearing on the proposed draft HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT & EQUITY IMPACTS REGULATION

Mountain View Coalition & NMELC Pleased with Last Night's Decision

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—Community members were pleased when the Air Quality Control Board voted unanimously to hold a public hearing on the Mountain View Coalition and New Mexico Environmental Law Center's proposed Health, Environment and Equity Impacts Regulation on Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

The meeting was held hybrid and approximately 50 people attended in person and nearly 70 people attended over zoom. Eighteen community members spoke during public comment in favor of the proposed equity impacts regulation and the need for a public hearing. Other community members submitted written comments in support; State Senator Linda Lopez submitted a [letter](#) of support which was read aloud during the meeting.

Spanish language interpretation was offered over the zoom platform at the Coalition's request. When a commenter spoke in Spanish, however, in-person attendees were not able to hear English interpretation unless they listened to the zoom meeting on their cell phones.

NMELC Senior Staff Attorney **Eric Jantz** and Staff Attorney **Maslyn Locke** introduced the regulation. Jantz said, “Most of the burdens and few of the benefits of economic development are experienced by residents in these overburdened communities. This regulation promotes clean economic development and a better quality of life.”

After the Air Board meeting, **Marla Painter** of Mountain View Community Action wrote, “This is the furthest we have ever gotten on having the Air Board or the City address our concerns and demands for a healthier environment in Bernalillo County, particularly in vulnerable neighborhoods. Although there were members of the industrial community there to testify that there was no need for such a regulation, our numbers were higher, and our arguments were cogent and compelling.”

Among those who spoke in support of the proposed regulation were:

Lauro Silva, former Air Quality Control Board member, and current member of the board of the Mountain View Neighborhood Association, who said, “We want to stop continuing to add more and more pollution. This permit regulation is to account for the cumulative impacts not just of one company but the entire amount of pollution that is taking place. We are not against business. We are for clean industry. Mountain View has been dumped on for too many years.”

Nora Garcia, President of the Mountain View Neighborhood Association, said, “Mountain View has endured many polluting industrial businesses, some resulting in SuperFund sites in the area. The permitting processes for these businesses have been approved by the Air Quality Control Board regardless of the health issues of respiratory illness, asthma, severe allergies, cardio-vascular problems and cancer. We hope that the draft impacts regulation will become a new beginning toward a healthier environment and improved quality of life.”

David Barber, President of the board of Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, said, “When you look at health statistics, our lifespan in the neighborhood area is typically 11-15 years shorter than anybody else in town. That’s not fair. We understand that industry needs to be able to do what they do and produce their products but by the same token we need to live long enough to enjoy what they are producing.”

Sofia Martinez, Co-coordinator of Los Jardines Institute and former resident of Mountain View, said, “We recognize that industry has a right to make a profit, but we have the right to live, and in good health.”

Xavier Barraza, Environmental and Economic Justice Coordinator, Environmental Justice Leadership Team, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, said, “This regulation makes asks that were asked for 30 years. It’s time for industry to invest a little bit. There

is an extensive amount of support for businesses that are interested in supporting health and welfare, an incredible amount of support to fund them and to help with the transition.”

Paul Ross, Farm Manager at Mandy’s Farm, said, “Much of our programming is concentrated in the Mountain View neighborhood and adjacent South Valley. Our employees have reported respiratory symptoms of exacerbated persistent coughing, sneezing, runny nose, dry eyes, watery eyes, excessive allergy symptoms and exhaustion since beginning work with our organization. We have a vested interest in supporting community efforts, so that we can continue to support the help of our staff and the individuals with disabilities who we support who are largely extra vulnerable to the pollution that we’re seeing in these neighborhoods. We believe it’s the duty of this board to hold a hearing”

State Senator and Majority Whip Linda Lopez’ [letter](#) of support said, “...this regulation will protect the health of all residents in Bernalillo county from overexposure to pollution and especially frontline communities who have long been disproportionately impacted such as Mountain View, East San Jose, and Greater Gardner. ... It is crucial that decisions made for allowing any future business venture in our community be vetted with a regulation that will protect our health and well-being.”

Here is a link to the [zoom recording](#) posted on the AQCB website.

Here is a link to the [draft regulation](#). Here is the [petition](#) that accompanied it to the AQCB. And here is a handout of [FAQs](#) about the draft regulation.

Pre-meeting coverage included an article in [The Paper](#) and a story on [KRQE](#).

Next steps include a scheduling of the hearing by the AQCB.

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