



News Release

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DTSC grant seeks to make a difference in environmentally burdened community

SACRAMENTO - A \$10,000 grant from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control ([DTSC](#)) is helping finance an innovative pilot project that allows residents to quickly report potential environmental hazards in a highly industrialized section of Los Angeles County using cell phones and other mobile devices.

The cutting-edge program in Wilmington - dubbed the Los Angeles Community Environmental Enforcement Network (LACEEN) - is one of the first to deploy a low-cost rooftop device to continuously monitor outdoor air pollutants at a home next to an oil refinery.

An open house and tour of the LACEEN project will be held on Feb. 26, beginning with a presentation at 11 a.m. at the office of Coalition for a Safe Environment in Wilmington. Afterward, a van will transport people to the home of a family that agreed to put the air monitoring device on their roof.

“This pilot program is all about real-time information,” said Debbie Raphael, DTSC Director. “It means more eyes on the street, and helps us meet our mission of protecting human health and the environment with the maximum amount of transparency and responsiveness.” She added that the LACEEN demonstrates the crucial need for communities and government to collaborate.

This is expected to be the first of several community monitoring efforts within fence-line communities.

Fence-line communities are neighborhoods that border a refinery or other possible pollution source. An environmental justice group, The Coalition for a Safe Environment ([CFASE](#)), developed the Wilmington monitoring program.

Wilmington residents can download an app on their mobile phones that enables them to report environmental and public health threats such as illegal dumping, a release of hazardous waste, chemical spills and the like.

Residents can use the app to access monitoring data from the shoebox-sized rooftop air monitoring device. It monitors outdoor concentrations of ozone, nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds and fine particle pollution, and sends data to a central website where it can be viewed by community members. Air quality agencies, which include the California Air Resources Board (ARB), the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), will work collaboratively with LACEEN to evaluate, interpret and

communicate the data being collected by the pilot study. Additional collaborative work the agencies are considering include co-located monitoring studies to assess the accuracy and reliability of this next generation of low-cost air monitoring devices compared to the more accurate, but also more expensive, conventional air monitoring instruments typically used by regulatory agencies.

Results from the Wilmington monitoring will be included in a larger study that UCLA School of Public Health will conduct with CFASE on the incidence of breast cancer in women who live near refineries, said Jesse Marquez, executive director of CFASE.

The DTSC grant helped fund a community-led environmental task force to address environmental impacts in the community. It also helped fund a partnership between CFASE in Wilmington and [Comite Civico Del Valle](#), an environmental justice community organization from the Imperial Valley, as well as the development of crucial software. A Cal/EPA grant funded the rooftop monitoring device, and the USEPA also provided funding.

Comite Civico Del Valle is the founding organization of the IVAN (Innovation, Value Access and Networking) environmental justice network. IVAN networks are community-based real-time reporting systems, and LACEEN is the fifth one in California. Similar systems are in place in Coachella and Imperial valleys, and Fresno and Kern counties, but LACEEN is unique because it is the first to integrate an air monitoring system and is more comprehensive than the others, Marquez said.

The programs fall within DTSC's mission, which is to protect public health and the environment from toxic harm. The Wilmington project is one of several DTSC and community partnerships for environmental justice projects under way along the 710 corridor – a 23-mile artery that links the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles with the rest of Southern California. It is home to one of the largest concentrations of oil refineries and rail yards in the state.



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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942

The Mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated properties, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.