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September 7, 2017

Most Reverend José H. Gómez
Office of the Archbishop of Los Angeles
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
3424 Wilshire Boulevard, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90010-2241

Your Excellency:

I am writing in regard to the potential reopening of the Allenco Energy Inc. oil development facility located at 814 West 23rd Street in the City of Los Angeles, a property Allenco leases from the Archdiocese. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) is concerned about the proximity of this facility to homes and schools, and respectfully asks you to re-examine your lease agreement with Allenco, since operations at this facility have had a deleterious effect on the health and well-being of the residents of the adjoining community.

In 2013, in response to multiple reports from community members experiencing a variety of health complaints, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) asked DPH to assess whether conditions at the Allenco facility were adversely affecting the health of nearby residents. DPH concluded that residents' recurrent physical findings of headaches, nausea, nosebleeds, and irritation to the eyes, nose, throat, were associated with emissions from the operations at this facility, and were unlikely to resolve without the company significantly modifying or curtailing facility operations.

Multiple chemical byproducts of oil development activities can lead to a wide array of health impacts, including eye, nose and throat irritation; headaches; worsening of asthma and other respiratory conditions; and negative consequences for quality of life and physical well-being. These health risks are particularly heightened for vulnerable populations such as young children and may occur with the detection of odor emissions, even when those emissions are within AQMD regional air quality standards, as was the case before Allenco was voluntarily shut-down. In addition, noise emanating from the facility during routine operations can negatively impact the well-being of nearby residents.

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Environmental studies of other urban drilling operations have shown that many health and environmental impacts are significant and unavoidable, regardless of emission control measures and that oil drilling operations should not be located in close proximity to residences and schools. This is particularly true when drilling operations are adjacent to homes. As you are aware, the Allenco facility is located approximately 50 feet from the nearest homes in the adjacent community, and the health and well-being of families living near the Archdiocese oil lease property will be affected by future operational and land use decisions under your authority.

The Allenco facility is located in University Park, which is a densely populated neighborhood that includes workers and students who commute to this area from other locations. Many of the residents already experience a disproportionate burden of environmental and health conditions, resulting from high rates of poverty and difficulties accessing affordable housing and healthcare. DPH hopes you can join with others in the community to promote a vibrant, healthy neighborhood for those living near the Archdiocese oil lease property in University Park. I am confident that our shared vision for environmental justice and health equity will allow us to work together and take all necessary steps to protect the health of vulnerable populations. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully yours,



Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.

Director

BF:cr

- c: Most Reverend Alexander Salazar, Executive Director, Office of Life, Justice and Peace, Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Michael Davitt, Director of Real Estate, Archdiocese of Los Angeles
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