

13-1127

TRANSPORTATION

MOTION

For nearly the past three years, community residents and elected officials of Cypress Park and Elysian Valley with the facilitation assistance and leadership of the former 45th Assembly District have been actively engaging Metrolink to respond to their demands for proactive accountability to reduce the air and noise pollution caused by the operations at Metrolink's Taylor Yard Central Maintenance Facility.

The growing concern of residents is the extent and magnitude of exposure to unknown quantities of diesel particulate matter and other known carcinogens, generated by the sources of diesel fuel emissions from the servicing of the Metrolink's locomotives and other operations at its Central Maintenance Facility, which is located within a half mile of schools: Aragon Avenue, Dorris Place, and Glassell Park; Nightingale; Sotomayor Learning Academy; Rio de Los Angeles State Park; Cypress Park Recreation Center; Los Angeles River Center; and within less than 4000 linear feet of a 471 mixed-use market and affordable multi-family and senior housing units, Taylor Yard Transit Village.

In June 2013, due to the persistency of the residents of the impacted neighborhoods of Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, and Glassell Park, and growing support from their local, state and federal elected officials, these L.A. river-adjacent neighborhoods achieved a milestone when Metrolink agreed to their request for a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) of its Taylor Yard Central Maintenance Yard Facility.

Lessons have been learned from the varying scopes and manner in which the Health Risk Assessments (HRA) on 18 rail yards in California were conducted, and clear results have demonstrated that living near a rail yard, a large diesel emission source, poses significant public health risk resulting from exposure to diesel particulate matter (PM). The Air Resource Board (ARB) has identified diesel particulate matter (PM) as a toxic air contaminant based on its potential to cause cancer and other adverse health problems, including respiratory illnesses and increased risk of heart disease. The HRAs found that in total, these rail yards are responsible for 210 tons of diesel pollution a year and put more than 3 million people at risk of cancer. Five of these rail yards were found to pose an excessive individual cancer risk of 500-2,500 chances per million, well beyond the level EPA considers acceptable.

Due to the variability in activities from one yard to the next, and differences in data collection techniques between railroads, the best procedures for inventory development are from the ground up using facility-specific data, whenever possible. To determine the emissions from a specific rail yard facility for conducting the HRA, there is no uniformly "typical" facility, and extrapolation or generalization from one facility to another is highly discouraged. The Sierra Research study also concluded that the development of a rail yard emission inventory requires detailed data collection and processing due to the wide range of site-specific emission sources in rail yard operations.

Metrolink has indicated that it has been implementing a number of measures to reduce emissions over the years, however by its own admission Metrolink is unable to confirm any improvements due to a lack of baseline environmental information to quantify the effectiveness of its emission reduction efforts to date nor assess the necessity for the implementation of further on-site remediation and possibly full relocation efforts at an accelerated pace.



To ensure the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the HRA that is being prepared and conducted by Metrolink, the City and the communities that have been affected by the unhealthy emissions and noise pollution generated from its Central Maintenance Yard's operations deserve the opportunity to weigh in on the preliminary development stages of the HRA's framework including but not limited to the scope of emission sources to be evaluated and that includes the full breadth of the multiple emission sources generated from the Metrolink Central Maintenance Yard Facility, determination of the assessment impact area; and the methodology and approach to be utilized in the preparation of the HRA.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council:

1. Direct the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) in consultation with the CLA, City Attorney, and any other relevant departments to identify the City's concerns and communicate them to Metrolink, the California Air Resources Board (ARB), and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD);
2. Request Metrolink to provide the City and the public a public review process on the proposed Health Risk Assessment (HRA) framework;
3. Direct BOE, CLA, and City Attorney to report back to Council within 30 days on the next steps of action to be undertaken.

PRESENTED BY:


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Councilmember, 13th District

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