
clean air for all
CAFA
now!

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 11

CAFA-now! Needs YOU!

To be successful, CAFA-now! is going to need more member participation. Some of the tasks with which we need help:

Management/Coordination of the Air Monitoring Effort

- **Compiling and Analyzing the Air Monitoring Data**

- **Outreach Through Social Media**

- **News Media Coordination**

If you have expertise and/or interest in any of these areas, please contact us at cafanow@gmail.com.

www.cafanow.org

Progress on Air Monitoring

CAFA-now! has purchased six Purple Air particulate monitors, and we have deployed five of them at residences in the vicinity of the Intel plant. Three of the devices are located side-by-side next to Flow monitors which have been in place since late 2022.

South Coast AQMD is the California regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. Among its many functions, AQMD tests the capabilities of virtually all low-cost air monitors and posts their findings on a public website. The EPA suggested we consult their website to learn more about our monitoring equipment. Their tests on this Purple Air model reveal that it is extremely accurate at measuring particulate matter when tested simultaneously next to the expensive and sophisticated monitoring equipment they use. We are currently testing the accuracy of our Flow monitors compared to the Purple Airs while continuing routine monitoring.

Our primary focus with all these monitors is on PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5 Microns) and smaller, considered to be the most dangerous. That is because when breathed into the lungs, PM2.5 remains and can cause damage to lung tissue. In addition, PM2.5 is so small that it can enter the blood stream, migrate to various organs, and deposit whatever it consists of, causing additional damage.

Emissions Monitoring

We continue working with community members in Ohio where Intel is initially investing **\$20 billion** to build a huge new semiconductor plant with multiple fabrication facilities (FABs for short) in what appears to be a semi-rural area near Columbus. Some reports have suggested that ultimately, Intel's investment there could reach **\$100 billion**. We are trying to provide these residents with assistance and support to help them develop an organization that can represent them while interacting with Intel Ohio, the Ohio State EPA and the Federal EPA and can effectively provide nearby communities with information they will want to have.

Environmental Justice Screen Correction

In our November newsletter, we noted an error that we promised to correct. We published a map generated by the EPA's EJScreen system that we understood to show the risk of being exposed to toxic cancer-causing chemicals in the geographic area around the Intel New Mexico plant. The EJScreen system is complex and so before we published that map, we shared it with EJScreen staff accompanied by the following note.

"Our organization, Clean Air for All—now! just did an EJ Screen around a large polluter in our area. We looked at a number of variables but in particular we are focused on the cancer map. A large part of the cancer map is red (95-100 percentile) and another big chunk is yellow (80-85 percentile). We want to put this onto our website and also include it in one of our upcoming

newsletters. But what should we say by way of explanation about what it all means?"

EJScreen staff replied as follows.

"After reviewing your attachment, we feel the following information below best answers your questions:

- Per <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/ejscreen-map-descriptions>, "Air Toxics Cancer Risk is defined as the lifetime cancer risk from inhalation of air toxics, as risk per lifetime per million people."
- Per <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen/how-interpret-ejscreen-data>, the "national percentile tells you what percent of the US population has an equal or lower value, meaning less potential for exposure/risk/proximity to certain facilities, or a lower percent minority."
- Therefore via your attachment, the cancer risk's raw value indicated in EJScreen from the sourced data (AirToxScreen) is equal to or higher to 95-100% of the US population lives."

Thus, our text that accompanied the map read as follows:

"Meanwhile, we have tapped into the EPA's Environmental Justice Screen [EJScreen] system to look at the potential risk of exposure to cancer-causing chemicals that the population near Intel New Mexico faces. *The map on the following page reveals that the air toxics cancer risk for much of the area near the plant is rated at a national percentile of 95-100. This means that the air toxics cancer risk in those areas is higher than all but 1-5 percent of the remainder of the United States. Another large swath in yellow is rated at a percentile of 80-90.*"

Shortly after that, a monitor for Ohio's Intel Megaproject Facebook page indicated that we had misrepresented the meaning of the map. We then corresponded further with EJScreen staff. Their reply indicated that the Ohio Intel Megaproject Facebook monitor was correct and revealed the source of the error.

"Per your attachment, your screenshot describing the layer's legend was partially cutoff when generated in August 2023. After further review of your image, we confirmed that your EJScreen screenshot does contain **TWO** layers within the EJScreen 'Maps' tab. Those two layers in your example are:

- **Air Toxics Cancer Risk–National Percentiles** (either from the "Maps' tab's 'Environmental Justice Indexes,' 'Supplemental Indexes,' or the 'Pollution and Sources' Indexes.") And
- **Cancer** (via selecting 'Maps' tab > 'Health Disparities' > 'Cancer')

Thus, the Facebook user is indeed correct. Two layers were enabled in the EJScreen screenshot for your newsletter."

While we had made a good-faith effort to ensure what we said about the map was correct and did not attempt to "misrepresent" its meaning, nevertheless our description of the map's content was incorrect. This map did not describe the risk of being exposed to cancer-causing chemicals. Instead, it indicated the possible risk of cancers in the area in relation to the rest of the country. In further communication with EJScreen staff, we were informed that for a variety of reasons, the cancer-related elements in their system are not as reliable as others. Going forward, we will rely

instead on the cancer study undertaken by the New Mexico Tumor Registry which we anticipate will soon be published.

Cancer Study

We still have no timetable or projected date for completion, publication and public presentation of the study of rates of selected cancers in the 14 census tracts around Intel New Mexico. We will inform CAFA-now! members as soon as the report becomes available.

CHIPS Communities United

We have recently been in contact with a new national organization called **CHIPS Communities United**. This organization is emerging in response to the impact of the Federal CHIPS Act through which Congress provided \$52 billion to encourage chip manufacturers to build manufacturing facilities in the United States. We are aware of at least nine major companies that are either building new or expanding existing plants. And Intel, in addition to the new Ohio plant, is expanding facilities and operations in Arizona and Oregon as well as here in New Mexico. Over 130 different entities have applied for CHIPS Act funding.

The purpose of CHIPS Communities United appears to be to provide leadership and support to communities that are being impacted by new or expanding semiconductor manufacturing facilities or will be impacted by such facilities currently or soon to be under construction. Clean Air for All–now! hopes to participate in this organization's efforts as it becomes more structured. We will report further on this in future newsletters.

Industry vs. the EPA

The *Albuquerque Journal* recently published an editorial titled “EPA could drown industries, make consumers pay.” The author is Yael Ossowski of Inside Sources, a news organization that claims to provide “...what the rest of the media stopped giving us long ago: a deeper look at the serious stories affecting our country and our world.”

The author complains about EPA’s intention to lower the annual standard for human exposure to PM2.5 from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to either 9 or 10. Never mind that the World Health Organization says that the new standard should be 5 micrograms per cubic meter. He then goes on to quote the National Association of Manufacturers who provide a series of unattributed “statistics” suggesting that this move would cause U.S. industry to collapse, destabilize the economy, and penalize consumers *a la* Chicken Little. Recently published medical research reveals that current, so-called safe pollution standards, such as for PM2.5, fail to protect human health and shorten life spans. See multiple articles about this research posted on the CAFA-now! website at cafanow.org.

Grants, Funding and Donations

Much of what we are trying to do requires funding. We are seeking grant opportunities but also must rely on donations from individuals. If you believe in what we are trying to do and want to support CAFA-now! please go to our website, cafanow.org, click the donate button, and follow the instructions. Donations can be made either by check or credit card, and any and all amounts are welcome. All donations are tax deductible, and our 501c3 fiscal sponsor, Southwest Information and Research Center, will send you a receipt.

CONTACT US

Our email address:
cafanow@gmail.com

If you need to reach us
on a more urgent basis,
call CAFA-now! Co-Chairs

Marcy Brandenburg
(505) 288-0093

or

Dennis O’Mara
(505) 803-6590

Become an advocate for your community!