



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
APRIL 15, 2010

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## **New Efforts Launched to Restrict Oil Drilling in South Los Angeles**

*EarthFest Celebration Includes Briefing on Cleaning Up Baldwin Hills Oil Field*

**Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> • 10-11:30 am • Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Mall (in Sears Automotive Center)**

**LOS ANGELES, CA** — Community residents will be gathering on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day to learn what they can do to restrict oil drilling in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field as part of EarthFest celebrations in South Los Angeles. “Recent events have turned the tide in our direction,” says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, executive director of Community Health Councils. “We need to use this momentum to improve health and the quality of life in areas surrounding the oil field.”

The community briefing on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Mall (in the white tent near Sears Automotive Center parking) will open at 10am with remarks from Second District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. The briefing will provide updates on the Baldwin Hills litigation, the county health survey, and plans to revise oil field zoning regulations. Highlights will include a status report on drilling activity; monitoring of the field by the Air Quality Management and information on how to report odors; the role of the Community Advisory Panel in ensuring continued input on oil field operations from community residents and advocates; updates on the Baldwin Hills Park: improvements, expansion, and status of the master plan. The last 30 minutes of the briefing will be opened up to questions from the audience. Participants are invited to enjoy the South LA EarthFest celebration that continues until 5 pm at the mall with 7 pavilions devoted to seminars on how to go green on a dime, green jobs, eco-films, urban gardening demonstrations and health screenings (visit [www.southlaearthfest.org](http://www.southlaearthfest.org) for more information).

The Baldwin Hills Oil Field operates in one of the most-densely populated areas of the country: nearly 300,000 residents live within 3 miles of the oil field. When the temporary restriction on drilling new wells in the field was set to expire in June 2008, community residents presented hours of testimony commenting on zoning regulations to regulate drilling in the area. The resulting

Community Standards District(CSD) failed to meet community expectations, and residents have worked tirelessly since September 2008 to reopen the review.

Community groups and individuals filed four lawsuits against Los Angeles County since the Board certified the CSD. The lawsuits contend that health and environmental safeguards are still inadequate and a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act. Just last week, LA County Superior Court upheld Culver City's six-month old moratorium on new drilling in the northern part of the oil field. The Judge was also scheduled to rule on a case brought by Community Health Councils, the National Resource Defense Council and others regarding the oil field on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The lawsuit contends that the county rushed the environmental review process for the oil field and has failed to provide adequate health and environmental safeguards against the dangers of expanded oil field drilling. The Judge's date to rule on this lawsuit has been pushed to June 3<sup>rd</sup>. If the County report is invalidated, a new one will be required before new drilling can take place.

Los Angeles County recently allocated \$155,00 for a health assessment of the Baldwin Hills. The survey will take place over the summer and will be directed at 1,000 randomly-identified residents from households in the 8 zip codes of the Baldwin Hills. The 15-minute phone interviews will ask residents about quality of life issues, odors, noise, vibrations, and specific health conditions of residents living in the vicinity of the oil field. It will also analyze mortality rates and patterns in the selected population based on death certificates reported to the Department of Public Health; and cancer rates and patterns based on data compiled by the University of Southern California. In August 2009, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a request from Supervisor Ridley-Thomas to direct the Regional Planning Department to initiate a study regarding possible amendments or modifications to the existing CSD for Board consideration.

The briefing will give residents an opportunity to voice their concerns about the proposed zoning regulations and learn what they can do to protect the health of their family and community. For more information, contact Bethany Ulrich, CHC Community Liaison, [Bethany@chc-inc.org](mailto:Bethany@chc-inc.org).

*Community Health Councils is a non-profit, community-based health promotion, advocacy and policy organization. Established in 1992, CHC's mission is to improve health and increase access to quality healthcare for uninsured, economically-disadvantaged, and underserved populations.*