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More Information on Children’s Health Care Enrollment

<http://www.100percentcampaign.org/needinsurance>

<http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1103621683034-41/CA+Open+Enrollment+Website-1-21-11-1.pdf>

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ICO Leaders Gear Up for Battle with Railroads over Westside Railyards

Things are starting to heat up on the battle for West Long Beach. In May or June, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and the Port of Los Angeles are scheduled to release the Environmental Impact Reports for the massive expansions proposed for railyards abutting West Long Beach neighborhoods. The railyards are the locations where trucks bring containers from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles and place them on railcars for distribution across the country.

Air Quality Community Action Meeting

Thursday, February 24, 6:00pm
Cabrillo High School Auditorium

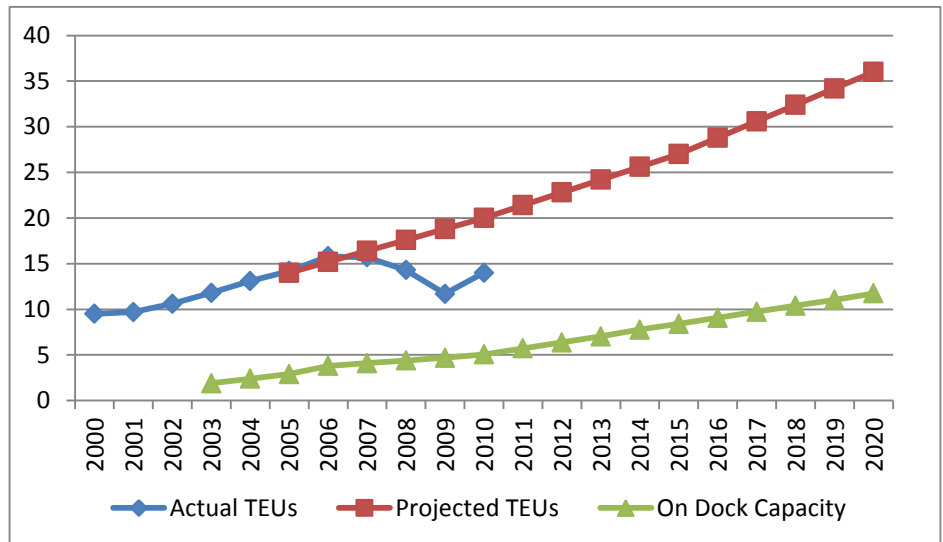
The Union Pacific Railroad (UP) is seeking to double the capacity of its ICTF railyard to handle 1.5 million containers per year. The railyard sits just north of Willow next to Stevens Middle School, Webster Elementary School and residential communities. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) considers it one of the four dirtiest railyards in the state. At public hearings, UP has stated it will not clean up the ICTF yard unless they are allowed to expand, even rejecting \$4 million offered by the Ports to begin immediate cleanup.

Not to be outdone by their competitor, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) is proposing to build a new railyard between Pacific Coast Highway and Willow just west of Cabrillo High School, Hudson School and the Villages at Cabrillo. They are also proposing a capacity of 1.5 million containers per year.

Five years ago, when these proposals first surfaced, UP and BNSF argued that the incredible growth of the ports made expanded railyard capacity essential to accommodate an over-stretched goods movement system. There were promises to make these railyards “green” though no one discussed the impact of 3 million total annual truck trips on the community.

Today with the economic slowdown even the most optimistic projections suggest that these railyards will not be needed, as illustrated by the graph below comparing projected twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs, a standard measure of container capacity) to actual TEUs. Moreover, as only one-third of the projected TEUs would be moved by rail, the third line on the graph indicates that on-dock rail capacity will be sufficient even for the most optimistic growth projections.

However, the railroads are deploying new tactics to gain control of these publicly-owned properties. They now say they want to move their operations at the City of Commerce to the West Long Beach area, thus removing trucks from the 710 freeway and reducing regional pollution.



The St. Lucy's Catholic Church ICO Local Organizing Committee met with newly-elected 7th District City Council Member James Johnson in January. He is working with the City and Port of Long Beach to promote zero emission alternatives. The City Council had a joint meeting of their Environmental Committee & Tidelands and Harbor Committee. The Railroads chose not to participate. On Thursday, February 24th, at 6:00pm in the Cabrillo High School auditorium, ICO and the teachers, parents and students of Westside Schools for Clean Air will meet to craft strategies for the next phase of the continuing struggle against railyard expansion.

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Enrollment for Children's Coverage Closes March 1st, 2011



As a result of the new federal health care law, all children must be offered health coverage if they apply, which means that insurance companies can no longer deny kids coverage because of a "pre-existing condition" like asthma or diabetes.

In California, parents can apply for health coverage for their children during the initial "open enrollment period" which ends on March 1st, or face much higher premium costs. This is for families with private health insurance, not those who get health coverage through their employer. After March 1st, the next "open enrollment period" is the month your child was born. For example, if your child's birthday is August 8th, you can apply during the entire month of August, without facing significantly higher premiums. (There are other open enrollment periods based on changes in family circumstances, such as birth, divorce, job loss, loss of public coverage, etc.)

It is critically important that families apply for coverage before March 1st to avoid much higher premiums. Also, families should keep their children covered because insurers can charge a 20 percent premium penalty if a child's coverage ends and then they apply for coverage again outside of an open enrollment period. Families can apply directly with an insurer or get help from an insurance agent or broker.

Remember, the new health care law means that no child should be denied

insurance for health reasons, and there are protections for consumers. If your child is denied health coverage for any reason, call the State Health Insurance Consumer Hotline at 1-800-466-2219.

Healthy Families and Medi-Cal Keep Children Covered

For some families, individual insurance is unaffordable, but low-cost or no-cost state health insurance programs - Healthy Families and Medi-Cal - keep millions of California kids healthy. In fact, two out of three uninsured children in California are currently eligible for a public coverage program but not enrolled. We can all do our part to enroll eligible children and ensure that California doesn't lose out on millions of dollars in federal bonus funds next time they are made available.

A child may qualify for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families coverage if their annual family income is up to roughly \$46,000 (for a family of three - higher for larger families). For more information call 1-877-KIDS NOW or visit

www.100percentcampaign.org/needinsurance.

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ICO Welcomes New Community Organizer Edgar Bonilla

As former ICO Organizer Luz Vazquez-Ramos begins her new life as a Peace Corps Volunteer in El Salvador, ICO welcomes our new Community Organizer, Edgar Bonilla, who, as fate would have it, is a native of El Salvador.

Prior to joining ICO, Edgar worked for five years as a union organizer, first with UNITE HERE Local 11 working with hotel workers in Los Angeles, and most recently with the National Union of Healthcare Workers in Emeryville.

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California Endowment Awards ICO 2-Year, \$120,000 Grant

The California Endowment has awarded ICO a two-year, \$120,000 grant to support community organizing activity associated with The Endowment's Central Long Beach Building Healthy Communities initiative.



Endowment core operating support will enable ICO to reach out to downtown Long Beach schools and faith congregations to identify and develop grassroots leadership able to mobilize target area residents in multiple efforts to achieve a variety of locally-identified objectives.

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