

## **Feds clear CA regulators in civil rights complaint**

By Associated Press

In the Fresno Bee, S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Tuesday, Sept. 4, 2012

FRESNO, Calif. -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that California regulators did not violate the civil rights of residents of three small farmworker towns by allowing toxic waste dumps to operate in the predominantly Latino communities, according to a report made public Tuesday.

The EPA's Office of Civil Rights dismissed the residents' allegations on grounds that the dumps did not cause any adverse health effects.

The ruling came in response to a complaint filed 16 years ago by residents of Kettleman City and Buttonwillow in central California and the hamlet of Westmorland to the south.

The residents sued the EPA last June in federal court for failing to respond to the original complaint within the required time period.

The suit claims the agency has engaged in "a pattern and practice" of failing to accept, reject or refer civil rights complaints and failing to issue preliminary findings in a timely manner, thus exposing poor communities of color to a disproportionate share of adverse environmental impacts.

According to a list prepared by the EPA, there were more than 30 pending complaints that have been accepted, but the agency has not made timely preliminary findings and recommendations in the cases. The majority were accepted for investigation in 2008 or earlier despite the 180-day deadline for issuing preliminary findings. Several, including the toxic waste dump complaint, were accepted in the 1990s.

Academic studies done in the 1980s and 1990s found that minorities and poor people were far more likely than whites to live near hazardous waste disposal sites, polluting power plants or industrial parks.

But in its investigation report, the EPA found that adverse health risks from accidental releases, groundwater and surface water contamination and air pollution were unlikely or minimal in the Latino communities where the dumps are located.

Residents criticized the ruling, saying the agency failed to examine other indications of discrimination, such as the social stigma, deflated housing prices and lack of economic development associated with toxic waste dump sites.

EPA's action on the toxic dump complaint follows the resolution last August of a 1999 civil rights pesticide complaint, in which EPA found that California regulators discriminated against Latino schoolchildren when they annually approved a fumigant used near their schools - the first time the agency made such a finding of discrimination in a civil rights case.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish mentions the Air District's Commercial Lawn & Garden Demonstration Program. For more information on this clip, contact Maricela Velasquez at \(559\) 230-5849.](#)

### **Atención Jardineros: El Distrito del Control del Aire ofrece cortadoras eléctricas comerciales**

El Popular, August 24, 2012

El Distrito del Control del Aire del Valle de San Joaquín quiere promover aquí en el Condado de Kern con motivo de disminuir tanto la contaminación ambiental como el ruido ensordecedor que provocan las cortadoras comerciales de gasolina.

De ahí el ofrecimiento que ellos hacen a todos los jardineros profesionales comerciales a que participen en este nuevo programa piloto que no contamina ni hace ruido, de acuerdo a un comunicado de prensa que enviaron a la redacción de El Popular que es el siguiente:

El Distrito del Aire del Valle está aceptando aplicaciones hasta el 20 de septiembre para el Programa de Demostración de Equipo de Cortadoras de Cero Emisión Comerciales. El programa piloto está abierto solamente a las operaciones de jardinería comerciales localizadas en el Valle y deben ser utilizadas en operaciones no residenciales.

Las compañías participantes pueden escoger de una lista de proveedores ofreciendo el equipo comercial operado con baterías, cortadoras de pasto inalámbricas, barredoras, cierras de cadena y podadoras. El Programa de Subvención del Distrito del Aire financiará el equipo de demostración para las compañías y agencias públicas seleccionadas para este programa.

Ahora, el equipo de cero emisiones es limitado al sector comercial. La demostración les dará a los participantes la familiaridad propia con el equipo y les ayudará a mejorar el uso de la tecnología limpia.

Los solicitantes son las agencias públicas que tienen su propio equipo del cuidado de los jardines y negocios privados, profesionales, con negocios de jardinería con licencia, incluyendo a los que tienen contratos con las agencias públicas. Puede obtener las aplicaciones en [http://www.valleyair.org/Grant\\_Programs/GrantPrograms.htm#CordlessLawMachine](http://www.valleyair.org/Grant_Programs/GrantPrograms.htm#CordlessLawMachine) y serán aceptadas por correo o en persona solamente.

Para más información sobre este programa, visite la página Web al [weberip@valleyair.org](mailto:weberip@valleyair.org) o llame al personal del Distrito al 551-230-5800.