

The City
City Council
(562) 220-2223

DARYL HOFMEYER
Mayor

PEGGY LEMONS
Vice Mayor

GENE DANIELS
Councilmember

TOM HANSEN
Councilmember

DIANE J. MARTINEZ
Councilmember

November 16, 2016

Councilmember Judith Mitchell
City of Rolling Hills Estates
4045 Palos Verdes Drive, North
Rolling Hills Estates, California 90274

RE: AQMD

Dear Councilmember Mitchell:

As members of the Paramount City Council, we are appealing to you as a fellow City Councilmember and, more pointedly, as an SCAQMD Boardmember, to help us with an urgent issue and its problematic impact on our community due to the way SCAQMD staff has conducted itself.

First, a bit of historical perspective. Paramount, incorporated in 1957, was once a major hay and dairy center that later became home to a large manufacturing sector. Many of these manufacturing businesses were connected to the aerospace industry. As with most cities in southeast Los Angeles County, Paramount was not a planned community. There are remnant residential uses within and/or very near industrial zones, land-use patterns established by the County of Los Angeles long before City incorporation. We deal with this legacy, and its challenges, on a daily basis.

In 2012, SCAQMD received complaints of a "burning metal" smell in one of our industrial neighborhoods. They began an investigation in 2013 that focused primarily on Carlton Forge Works (a metal manufacturer for the aerospace industry). Carlton submitted a health-risk assessment to SCAQMD in 2014 and it was approved in 2016. From what we were told, Carlton Forge significantly reduced its emissions by more than 95%.

However, SCAQMD ambient monitors detected elevated levels of hexavalent chromium in another area of Paramount's industrial sector. The source of these levels has apparently not been found yet.

In the wake of these hexavalent chromium readings, SCAQMD staff sent out a rather inflammatory press release without informing the City. At a town hall meeting to alert the public about these levels, SCAQMD staff communicated in jargon-heavy, scientific ways that were not necessarily easy to understand. This style of communication included replies to questions asked by our residents. Also, SCAQMD staff failed every chance they had to delineate the powers, or lack thereof, that the City has in regards to air quality control management versus those of SCAQMD.

We feel, in a sense, that SCAQMD blindsided the City with the initial release sent to the media. (We didn't know about the press release's content until contacted by a newspaper reporter.) Then the agency came to town with a highly technical presentation that did little to truly address the questions or concerns expressed by our residents. It is imperative that SCAQMD staff recognize the impact of their statements and the havoc they can create in communities without having a well-thought out plan of action for remedying problems they have identified. Their message can be very harmful without a solution.

It needs to be noted that ever since SCAQMD became a presence in Paramount, the City has been accommodating in every way possible. When SCAQMD approached the City for assistance with installing additional air-quality monitors, we waived the need for encroachment permits and assisted SCAQMD with getting permission from Southern California Edison (SCE) to install the monitors on SCE-owned poles. To expedite things in case SCE stalled, the City offered SCAQMD the opportunity to install the monitors on City-owned stop signs and street signs. The City has also consistently offered SCAQMD the use of our facilities for town hall meetings at no cost.

The health, safety and well-being of our residents are always our top priorities. So, too, is the clarity and timeliness of the information our residents receive regarding any potentially health-impacting issues. As such, we respectfully request the following:

- SCAQMD to be accountable and take responsibility for its role as air quality regulators for the Southern California region, and make clear that cities have no jurisdiction or power of enforcement in this regard;
- SCAQMD share any future press releases with the City of Paramount's management team and Mayor's office in advance of submittal to the press and to our community members;
- SCAQMD brief the City's management team on a daily basis regarding the progress of investigations and monitoring level results. (We understand that the SCAQMD has recently reached out to City staff and we hope this continues.);
- Information be conveyed to the City and to our residents in a more understandable, layman's terms, in a "user friendly" format – our goal is to be both educational and to avoid inciting unnecessary fears and hysteria, and the manner in which the information and maps have been shared so far has not been helpful;
- Ensure that more robust and substantive data is collected, analyzed, reviewed and verified by a third-party prior to being presented in a public meeting;
- SCAQMD and the City of Paramount work collaboratively to conduct meetings with our residents where we can offer facts, answers and solutions to avoid uncertainty and heightened fears;

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Sent To **Councilmember Judith Mitchell**
City of Rolling Hills Estates
 Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. **8045 Palos Verdes Dr., North**
 City, State, ZIP+4 **Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274**

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Sent To **Councilmember Ben Benoit**
City of Wildomar
 Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. **23873 Clinton Keith Rd., Ste. 201**
 City, State, ZIP+4 **Wildomar, CA 92595**

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Sent To **Mr. Michael A. Cacciotti, Mayor Pro Tem**
City of South Pasadena
 Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. **1414 Mission Street**
 City, State, ZIP+4 **South Pasadena, CA 91030**

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Sent To **William A. Burke, Ed. D., Chair**
C/O: Marie Patrick
 Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. **South Coast AQMD**
 City, State, ZIP+4 **21865 Copley Drive**
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

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- SCAQMD seriously consider accepting assistance offered by the City of Paramount which will help to locate and stop the polluters. City staff have offered SCAQMD the use of business license data and the use of City Code Enforcement officers to help in any way possible; and,
- Any enforcement actions taken by SCAQMD be shared with the City of Paramount management team and its elected officials immediately.

The City of Paramount takes very seriously anything that might impact the health of our residents, the people who work here, and those throughout the region who visit us. The

City has been dedicated to working collaboratively with SCAQMD since the inception of the investigation here. We certainly desire to continue this collaborative effort to best address and resolve these critical issues as swiftly as possible to ensure the safety of our community. We are available to assist, too, by providing our own air quality experts and financial and staff resources to expedite the process.

Your assistance in conveying this message is greatly appreciated. Our City staff is also available to meet with you to further discuss SCAQMD's communication process that is of such concern for us and certainly for other communities.

CITY OF PARAMOUNT
PARAMOUNT CITY COUNCIL



Daryl Hofmeyer
Mayor



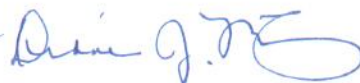
Peggy Lemons
Vice Mayor



Gene Daniels
Councilmember



Tom Hansen
Councilmember



Diane J. Martinez
Councilmember

CC: Ben Benoit, AQMD Board Vice Chairman; Chairman of the Stationary Source Committees;
Michael Cacciotti, AQMD Representative, Cities of L.A. County; Eastern Region;
William A. Burke, Ed. D., AQMD Chairman