



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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NEWS

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SCAQMD Releases Updated “Right to Breathe” Documentary on Environmental Justice

Video presents compelling stories from parents, students, community activists, and others affected by air pollution

The South Coast Air Quality Management District this month released an updated version of its signature documentary film, “The Right to Breathe.”

The “Right to Breathe” reveals the serious health effects of Southern California's air pollution, shared through stories of individuals. Directed by award-winning documentary filmmaker Alexandre Philippe, the film aims to make viewers aware of the impacts of air pollution while also inspiring them to take action and participate in practical solutions to help improve our air quality.

The video includes Riverside resident Karen Jakpor, who suffers from severe asthma and her daughter, Otana Jakpor, a medical student dedicated to fighting against air pollution and respiratory diseases; Susana Negrete, a mother of three boys from San Bernardino, who all suffer from asthma; Florence Gharibian, an air quality activist who lost her husband to respiratory disease; Catherine Leys from Torrance, an activist concerned about oil refinery operations and harmful emissions; and Lou Calanche and Michelle Benavides of Legacy LA, who point out the striking disparity of low-income neighborhoods facing the brunt of industrial and vehicle air pollution.

“You have to take care of the people who don’t have the power to take care of themselves. We have to represent them in halls (where) they sometimes aren’t represented,” SCAQMD Governing Board Chair William A. Burke, Ed.D, says in the video. “Our mission is to clean up Southern California’s air and make it healthful for everyone to breathe.”

SCAQMD originally premiered “The Right to Breathe” in 2011. This version shows that while progress is being made, the fight for environmental justice and to clean the Southland’s air is a long and difficult battle.

“This film is a powerful testament to the burden of air pollution on all Southland residents, and especially on those who live in low-income, minority communities close to pollution sources,” said Burke.

The documentary film is available on SCAQMD's website at www.aqmd.gov .

SCAQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

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