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POWER

May 22, 2009

Senator Leland Yee
State Capitol, Room 4074
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Yee,

I am writing on behalf of POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights) in San Francisco, to register our opposition to Senate Bill 792 Tidelands and submerged lands: City and County of San Francisco: Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. POWER is a multi-racial membership organization of low-income families and workers in the Bayview neighborhood of San Francisco, organizing for racial, gender, economic and environmental justice.

We are opposing SB 792 because this bill offers an unfair exchange of land for the residents and families of Bayview Hunters Point. The bill authorizes an exchange of parkland that currently benefits the neighborhood for land that is not equal to the original parcel and land that is currently contaminated by toxins.

As you are aware African American communities are disproportionately adversely impacted by environmental racism, and there is a long history of environmental hazards that have affected the health of families in the Bayview neighborhood. 80% of San Francisco's sewage comes into Bayview through sewage treatment plant; the neighborhood is bordered by major freeway thoroughfare that daily exposes residents to diesel and car emissions; Hunters Point Naval Shipyard hazards have plagued the community since the it closed in the early 1970s; 50% of neighborhood residents are estimated to have cancer or respiratory illnesses as a result of radioactive elements and other toxic inorganics being left behind by the US Navy and other polluting industries.

Exchanging a clean piece of parkland, whose occurrence is rare in the community, for a polluted area would result in the State of California engaging in environmental racism. Giving clean land to a multibillion-dollar developer while providing dirty land in exchange to a working class African American community is environmental racism. The priority of the state of California should be to clean the Hunters Point Shipyard to residential standards, in accordance with Proposition P, passed by 87% of San Francisco voters, thereby ending the practice of environmental racism in one of the last remaining African American communities in San Francisco.

POWER is urging your office to oppose SB 792, as an unfair and unequal exchange of land that will adversely impact the residents of Bayview Hunters Point, and the City of San Francisco as a whole.

Respectfully,

Jaron Browne
Lead Organizer
POWER