January 25, 2022

South Coast Air Quality Management District
c/o Governing Board Chair Ben Benoit, Vice Chair Vanessa Delgado and Members
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

RE: Rendering Plant Odor Affecting Southeast Los Angeles Communities

Dear Governing Board Chair Benoit, Vice Chair Delgado and Members:

We are writing to you to urge you to take immediate action to strengthen and clarify Rule 415, the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s policy regarding Rendering Plants.

For years our Southeast Los Angeles communities have voiced concerns about harmful and bothersome odors wafting from local rendering facilities. The harsh odors are a daily occurrence for our communities, some of the most densely populated, multicultural and under-resourced communities in the District.

Rule 415, adopted November 3, 2017, describes requirements for Odor Mitigation Plans, signage and tracking of odor complaints, and record-keeping at Rendering Plants. However, the rule does not specify consequences for Rendering Plants that do not meet these requirements.

Instead of inspections with enforcement, staff follow internal policies that rely on a quantity of external complaints about odors. When three or more individual complaints are received within a one-hour period, an inspector is sent out to verify and confirm the source. Upon confirmation from six individual reports, the plant may be issued a public nuisance violation. The rule is vague about accountability and requires several hours per day from individuals looking to report odor nuisances.

The District’s internal policies are neither transparent nor effective. There are many situations the rule does not contemplate. For example: What happens when callers wish to remain anonymous? When they withhold their addresses because of fear of repercussions, especially if they fear government officials knocking on their doors? What if the smells are seeping through windows in the middle of the night?

Our communities are already overcoming several institutional barriers and difficulties. Reporting air quality concerns should not further disenfranchise environmental justice communities like those in Southeast Los Angeles. We urge you to refer this matter immediately to the Stationary Source Committee to discuss strengthening and clarifying Rule 415.
Sincerely,

Anthony Rendon
Speaker, CA State Assembly (AD-63)

Cristina Garcia
Member, CA State Assembly (AD-58)

Jackie Goldberg
Board Member District 5, LAUSD

Alicia Romero
Mayor, City of Bell

Ana Maria Quintana
Vice Mayor, City of Bell

Ali Saleh
Councilmember, City of Bell

Fidencio Joel Gallardo
Councilmember, City of Bell

Monica Arroyo
Councilmember, City of Bell

Maria Pulido
Mayor, City of Bell Gardens

Marco Barcena
Councilmember, City of Bell Gardens
Karina Macias
Councilmember, City of Huntington Park
Eddie Martinez
Vice Mayor, City of Huntington Park
Graciela Ortiz
Mayor, City of Huntington Park
Daisy Lomeli
Councilmember, City of Cudahy
Jose R. Gonzalez
Vice Mayor, City of Cudahy
Elizabeth Alcantar
Mayor, City of Cudahy
Ivan Altamirano
Councilmember, City of Commerce
Oralia Rebollo
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Commerce
Leonard Mendoza
Mayor, City of Commerce
Lisseth Flores
Councilmember, City of Bell Gardens
Karina Macias
Vice Mayor, City of Huntington Park
Graciela Ortiz
Mayor, City of Huntington Park
Karina Macias
Councilmember, City of Huntington Park
Ricardo Lara  
Councilmember, City of Maywood

Mary Mariscal  
Treasurer, City of Maywood

Al Rios  
Mayor, City of South Gate

Maria del Pilar Avalos  
Vice Mayor, City of South Gate

Denise Diaz  
Councilmember, City of South Gate

Maria Davila  
Councilmember, City of South Gate

Gil Hurtado  
Councilmember, City of South Gate