



SUMMER 2007

THE CAUSE

A Newsletter of the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy

Organized Community Halts LNG

The power of a well organized community was witnessed on April 9th, when over 2,500 residents of Oxnard, Malibu and Ventura County made their voices heard to effectively halt BHP Billiton's proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import terminal off the coast of Oxnard.

While strong opposition to other LNG projects off the central coast go back to actions organized by Native Americans and environmentalists in the 1970s, opposition to BHP's most recent proposal go back to 2002 and have included a broad based coalition of environmental and community organizations led by the California Coastal Protection Network.



PHOTO BY BRETT MILLAR

CAUSE Vice-President, Carmen Ramirez, addresses No on LNG rally on April 9, 2007.

In the most recent and important LNG battle to-date, CAUSE played a significant role in leading the April 9th grassroots mobilization, that

gave our state elected officials on the California State Lands Commission, the broad-based popular support they needed to do the right thing by rejecting BHP's project. After 12 hours of public testimony, with thousands of residents looking on, the three-member commission voted 2-1 to deny both certification of the environmental impact report and the lease of coastal land to import LNG. This victory was a true display of democracy in action.



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Building Power for Regional Change

Early this year CAUSE embarked on a new path to expand its capacity to affect positive change in the region— that of building a grassroots regional power base capable of mobilizing thousands of people around social, economic and environmental issues affecting their lives. This commitment to building a

sustainable base of people power in the Central Coast region of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties will entail the creation of a broad-based regional affiliation of institutional partners, and the training and inspiring of a diverse group of leaders from throughout the region, capable of utilizing their

collective power to bring about much needed policy reform and meaningful long term social change.

Why build a sustainable regional grassroots power base in the Central Coast? Over the last twenty years, here in

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Message from the President

Dear CAUSE friends,

CAUSE is flourishing in these summer months because of all of you. Thank you! I use the word “flourish” deliberately. At our January retreat, we asked ourselves: What do we need to do to ensure that our community, all of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, flourishes for the next seven generations? How would that change the way we think and act? In these last few months, we have begun to incorporate this vision and sense of the future into what we do at CAUSE.

With other community partners, we stopped BHP Billiton’s LNG (liquid natural gas) facility, and formed alliances that will help us in future struggles. Our call for sustainable and renewable energy plans and for a thorough review of California’s energy needs and all options to fill those needs were heard at all government levels.

This LNG victory would not have been possible without the extraordinary activities of our powerful organizing staff, Cesar Hernandez and Beatriz Garcia. They worked tirelessly with board and staff, our partner groups and the cities of Malibu and Oxnard to turn out over 2,500 people at the April 9th State Lands Commission hearing in Oxnard. The commissioners voted that night to deny a license to BHP Billiton. This effort was one of the first in the expansion of CAUSE’s regional community organizing program.



Monika Szymurska, Janet Bloomfield and Board President, Pamela Meidell.

We celebrated the 90th birthday of one of Ventura County’s local heroines, Alice McGrath. Alice shows us all that “going the distance for justice” is a lifelong endeavor, and brings together friends from every part of society. Happy birthday, Alice, and thank you for leading the way.

Ventura County CLUE received national attention for its part in launching a New Sanctuary Movement to provide shelter in churches for undocumented people. VC CLUE worked with the United Church of Christ in Simi Valley who courageously voted to offer hospitality to immigrants, joining a coalition of interfaith communities nationwide that has taken a public and moral stand for immigration rights.

CLUE’s executive director, Alice Linsmeier, recently loaned me her copy of *Black Elk Speaks*, which I had not read for a long time. Many passages touched me, and made me think of CAUSE, our county, our country. In it,

Black Elk shares a vision of what it truly means to be powerful and to flourish. I find wisdom in his words that can guide us in the days ahead.

When he talks about power, he addresses each of the four directions in the sacred hoop of his vision and names the power associated with it: to the East “a power that is peace,” to the North “the power of a cleansing wind,” to the West “the power to make live,” and to the South “the power to grow.”

“And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father, And I saw that it was holy....”

“All over the universe, they have finished a day of happiness. And looking down, I saw that the whole wide circle of the day was beautiful and green, with all fruits growing and all things kind and happy. And I heard a voice say: ‘Behold this day, for it is yours to make.’”

This vision of a flourishing world is ours to make in Ventura County. Let us make it together.

In peace,

Pamela S. Meidell
President of the Board

CAUSE Builds Power in the Central Coast Region *Continued from page 1*

our region and throughout the nation, we have witnessed escalating economic inequity and poverty. Correspondingly, the voices of hard working people and their families continue to be silent in policy issues directly affecting their lives, from the disastrous global and domestic effects of the war in Iraq, to the lack of adequate public transportation, healthcare and living wage jobs.

The goal of the CAUSE Organizing Project is to build grassroots power to realize social justice and to bring about

systemic change in the Central Coast region. Effective community organizing creates collaborative relationships across diverse racial, economic, denominational and neighborhood groups for the purpose of building a sustainable region for the common good.

A wonderful example of this type of organizing for power was experienced locally on April 9, 2007 as a result of CAUSE’s role in organizing against BHP Billiton’s LNG terminal proposed off the coasts of Oxnard. On that

day the residents of Oxnard, Malibu and Ventura County demonstrated the power of the people, when we are organized (see LNG article).

April 9th was just the beginning. CAUSE is working with allied organizations in the region to build on this experience to continue the struggle for social, environmental and economic justice that is the root of a sustainable regional economy – one that is just, prosperous and environmentally healthy for all. Imagine the possibilities!

Community Groups Urge City Big Box Ordinance

Wal-Mart has once again taken the offensive in its effort to open a new big box store in the City of Ventura. In response to the recently adopted interim smart growth ordinance, the retail giant has now signed a lease and is proposing a green building to City staff in order to meet the new design guidelines for the city's Victoria Corridor. However, Wal-Mart has also expanded its proposal from a smaller store like the one in Oxnard, to a Super center of over 230,000 square feet.

"The experience of other communities tells us a Supercenter will create a black hole for local businesses and

the economy of Ventura," reported Das Williams, Legislative Analyst for CAUSE. "Everything will get sucked into it: Trader Joe's, Green Thumb, grocery stores and the thousands of unionized workers that depend on decent wages and health care."

On July 1, 2007, Livable Ventura announced that they are proposing a big-box ordinance to protect their community from undesirable development on the Victoria Avenue Corridor. This action came in light of a recent decision by the California Supreme Court, which upheld the city of Hanford's right to control big-box

store locations, and results of a recent CAUSE poll showing solid opposition among city residents to the proposed Wal-Mart development.

Affirming the broad-based local opposition to Wal-Mart, Nan Waltman, Chair of Livable Ventura, stated, "We urge the City to listen to city residents and use the authority provided by the California Supreme Court decision to deny Wal-Mart a permit to locate a Supercenter at the Kmart site."

For more info on how you can help, contact CAUSE at (805) 658-0810 extension 202.

CAUSE 2007 Summer Newsletter in memory of Janet Bloomfield



"Make of yourself a light" said the Buddha, before he died...(The Buddha's Last Instruction, poem by Mary Oliver). CAUSE honors Janet Bloomfield, CAUSE Advisory Board Member and Atomic Mirror United Kingdom Director who died unexpectedly this April. Janet was an international light in the nuclear abolition and nonproliferation efforts, and whether she was addressing the European Parliament, inspiring grassroots crowds in New York, or sharing with CAUSE, her light was strong. Janet's joyous spirit dedicated to peace and justice remains with us.

CAUSE Mission Statement

Who is CAUSE?

CAUSE is a community planning and policy research center serving the Central Coast of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Our Mission is to promote economic and social justice for working families in the Central Coast Region through policy advocacy, research, organizing, leadership development and community building.

CAUSE's Vision is that the people of the Central Coast region together can create a community where we all contribute to, and benefit from, a sustainable economy that is just, prosperous and environmentally healthy. We ground this vision in a common set of values that include: economic and social justice, human dignity, equity, environmental sustainability, participatory democracy, critical thinking, collaboration, enlightened self-interest and moral integrity.

Since our formation in 2001, CAUSE has led successful efforts focused on living wage jobs, accountable development,



Children attending April 9th California State Lands Commission.

health coverage expansion, women's economic justice, fair representation and community support for union organizing campaigns. Through these, and other campaigns, CAUSE has directly brought about improved wages, and or, health benefits for over 5,000 working families, engaged over 260 allied community, labor, and faith organizations, while directly engaging over 13,000 unduplicated number of individuals in local, regional, state and national campaigns and initiatives toward achieving the organization's program goals of policy reform and meaningful social change.

VC CLUE Launches New Sanctuary Movement

Region's Support for New Sanctuary Swells

Inspired by the immigrant marches of 2006, and as a response to the current mass raids and deportations, the Ventura County Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (VC CLUE), has launched the region's new interfaith immigrant sanctuary movement. As part of a growing national movement, these and other faith leaders have drawn from the sanctuary movement of the 1980's that protected Central American Refugees in congregations, as faith-based witnesses to influencing US foreign public policy in that region.

Today's New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) is bringing together a broad spectrum of faiths to accompany and protect immigrant families facing the violation of their human rights, including workplace discrimination and unjust deportation. In the NSM, prophetic hospitality is offered to one family, in one congregation. The family member in sanctuary has a good work history, US citizen children and other family members, and is facing deportation, thereby tearing apart their family. The family courageously becomes a national spokesperson that put a human face on the too often

political debate around immigration policy.

Beginning with nine Ventura County NSM educational events sponsored by VC CLUE since February 2007, support

“Today's New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) is bringing together a broad spectrum of faiths to accompany and protect immigrant families facing the violation of their human rights.”

for NSM took off when Liliana, a 29 year old factory worker, was awakened by 5 ICE officers, that entered their Oxnard home where her US Citizen husband and three US children slept at 6:00 am, to arrest and deport her. One officer took pause when he realized Liliana was nursing her newborn baby, and her four-year old, Susi, awoke and begged them not take their mother.

Liliana has been living in a sanctuary congregation in Long Beach. The Center

for Human Rights and Constitutional Law in LA is reviewing her case. Meanwhile, the United Church of Christ of Simi Valley, overwhelmingly voted to become a sanctuary congregation, for Liliana or families like hers.

VC CLUE invites members of congregations to sign a pledge of support, become allied support groups, help to renovate the sanctuary residence, provide material, spiritual, educational or economic support, or invite VC CLUE Director to speak to groups.

VC CLUE is a county-wide coalition of faith-based advocates, whose mission is to raise the level of awareness among our congregations of the linkage between economic justice and the imperatives of faith; and to engage congregations in efforts to influence policy and public opinion to achieve economic justice, particularly for working families in the region. We are with those who struggle.

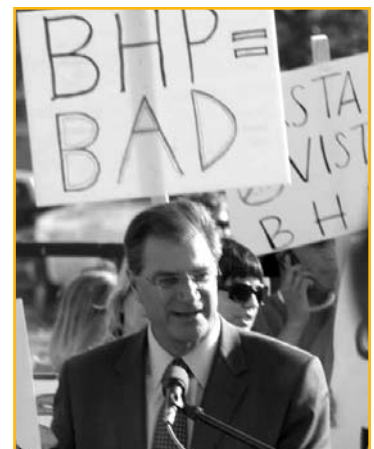
For more information on VC CLUE and how you can participate, contact Alice Linsmeier at (805) 658-0810 ext. 204, or at clue@coastalalliance.com.

Organized Community Halts LNG *Continued from page 1*

The mobilization continued three days later, with over 500 residents attending the California Coastal Commission, which unanimously rejected BHP Billiton's Project. While the mounting evidence as to the dire environmental and public health effects of the LNG import project and years of vigilant opposition by the Environmental Defense Center and the Sierra Club provided the foundation for stopping the project, ultimately, it was these

two days of strong broad-based public opposition that was necessary for the final decisions of the two key commissions and Governor Schwarzenegger's veto of the Cabrillo Port LNG project.

For more information on efforts to address other proposed LNG import projects off the Central Coast, contact the California Coastal Protection Network at www.coastaladvocates.com or 310-230-4210.



Mayor Tom Holden of Oxnard joins the community's opposition to LNG.

Thank You CAUSE Donors!

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Invited!*



**Community Building Luncheon
Friday, September 7, 2007**



**Central Coast Alliance United
for a Sustainable Economy
2021 Sperry Avenue, Suite 18
Ventura, CA 93003**

CAUSE Community Building Luncheon

Networking:

10:30 am – 11:30 am, Program: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Out of respect for your time we pledge to start and complete the program on time.

Courtyard by Marriott, Oxnard

600 Esplanade Dr., Oxnard, CA 93003 (Hwy 101 at Vineyard Exit)

Keynote Speaker

California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi

Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Manuel Pastor, Nationally Renowned Economist and Author

The CAUSE Community Building Luncheon is a fundraising event and, although this is a hosted event, guests will be presented with an appeal for donation at one point in the program. Of course, donations are not mandatory but are very much appreciated.



**Keynote Speaker:
California Lieutenant Governor
John Garamendi**

Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy

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