

**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**  
**Los Angeles Unified School District**  
**Office of Environmental Health and Safety**

**TO:** Local District Superintendents  
Local Districts

**DATE:** October 20, 2021

**FROM:** Carlos A. Torres, Director  
Office of Environmental Health and Safety

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DOMINGUEZ CHANNEL ODOR IN CARSON**

Last week, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) provided an advisory concerning foul odors emanating from the Dominguez Channel, a 15 mile estuary that travels through Carson and Gardena. This communication provides updates from the Los Angeles County Departments of Public Health and Public Works and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

The odors are caused by hydrogen sulfide produced by the natural decay of organic material (vegetation and marine life) at the bottom and sides of the Dominguez Channel. Although these odors have occurred occasionally in the community in the past, they have not previously lasted this long. Public Works indicated that the lack of flowing water due to drought conditions appear to have contributed to this condition.

Public Works continue to address conditions within the channel, concentrating near term efforts to reduce the odors and are planning long term measures to restore the channel to a healthy estuary. Last week, crews began spraying a natural, water-based, and biodegradable deodorizer in the channel to neutralize the odor within the channel. This is expected to knock down odors within 3-5 days of application. Yesterday, a bubbler system was installed to increase the levels of dissolved oxygen in the channel and prevent the production of additional hydrogen sulfide gas.

Public Health and the SCAQMD continue to conduct air monitoring, finding very low levels of hydrogen sulfide in the air east of the Dominguez Channel. At these low levels, hydrogen sulfide does not have long-term health effects, but does cause nuisance odors (e.g., rotten egg smell) that may cause short-term symptoms and impact quality of life. Persons may experience temporary symptoms such as headaches, nausea, or eye, nose, and throat irritation. Symptoms should go away when the odors are no longer present.

Where odors are present and causing discomfort, schools may initiate an Indoor Activity Schedule by keeping doors and windows closed as much as possible and keeping ventilation running. Schools are already utilizing enhanced air filtration due to COVID-19 which will also help increase air flow.

In their latest update, Public Health advises that odors seem to have become more prevalent at night which may explain why impacts to schools have lessened. Public Health is now advising residents to limit outdoor activities between the hours of 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. and whenever odors are strong.

Although it appears that impacts to schools have become less frequent, I want to reiterate our support and promise to remain vigilant. OEHS will remain engaged with the County and SCAQMD and continue to monitor for hydrogen sulfide at schools.

Lastly, please report any odors directly to OEHS at (213) 241-3199 and to the SCAQMD at 1-800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7644). Should you have any questions or need assistance, do not hesitate to contact my office at (213) 241-3199.

c: Members, Board of Education

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