



RICHMOND PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE

New RPA website

We are changing and improving our communication among Richmond activists. We are redoing our website, www.RichmondProgressiveAlliance.net, to keep it current and also provide more in-depth discussion. At the same time the newsletter will change slightly. It will let you know briefly what is happening and what is available on the web and its format will soon be different. Let us know what you think.

RPA Statement: Measure T

Measure T was a groundbreaking citizens' initiative passed by the Richmond voters in Nov. 2008. Measure T required the city's largest manufacturers, like Chevron, to pay a higher business license fee than the corner grocery store.



Chevron spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to defeat Measure T in the election, and failed.

Chevron then used its army of lawyers to challenge Measure T in court. A superior court judge validated that the city had the right to change its license fees. The judge, however, sided with Chevron on technicalities, insisting that every aspect of measure T's implementation and enforcement be spelled out.

The city's legal staff are advising the Richmond City Council on two possible courses of action. There are many applicable precedents on the books to justify a legal appeal. To support the community's mandate for fair taxation, the City council can also make the language adjustments recommended by the judge and resubmit it to the voters as a revised measure on the November 2010 ballot.

Mayor Gayle McLaughlin and the thousands of Richmond voters who support Measure T remain confident that justice and fair taxation will ultimately prevail, one way or the other, with this council's help or with the next.

Tell friends about the RPA email newsletter. Send names and emails to

RPAactivist@gmail.com

Great Kick-Off for End Chevron Perks Campaign

More than 70 people crowded into the room to get more information or help kick-off the campaign to End Chevron's special cap on its utility tax rate. The meeting, sponsored by the RPA, was impressive for its enthusiasm for this campaign as well as its broadness and diversity -- neighborhood organizations, unions, groups fighting Chevron on its pollution and environmental policies.



Four city council members, Ritterman, McLaughlin, Butt and Rogers, attended and gave strong support to the campaign. We know we are having an impact because Chevron sent a couple of people as did the Chamber of Commerce, BAPAC, and some other Chevron friendly groups to check us out.

The Globe and the Contra Costa Times had staff at the meeting.

[Click here for the photos and story.](#)

Young Activist Workshops

Young people are our future and our purpose. The RPA has started a workshop series to help young activists further develop their leadership skills. The next workshops analyze successes: The Battle of Seattle (1999), Coalition of Immokolee Farm Workers (2005) and the Climate Justice Movement (2009) and one on using art as an organizing tool. These will be led by David Solnit, an active participant in these movements. If you want more information or know young activists who should be contacted call RPA 510-595-4661

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Experts on Inequality [on web](#)

Healthcare Crisis: Reform or Deform?

A community forum about health care policy from a progressive perspective. Panel discussion followed by Q&A.

- ◆ **Dr. Laura Wright** - Physicians for National Health-care Program
- ◆ **Jack Heyman** - ILWU (International Longshore & Warehouse Union) Organizer
- ◆ **Pat Snyder**- Health Care for All, Contra Costa County
- ◆ **Mike Parker** - Richmond Progressive Alliance
- ◆ **Roger Wilkins** - UPS (United Parcel Service) Teamster Shop Steward, Organizer - Teamsters for a Democratic Union

Wednesday, February 10, 2010 6-8 p.m.
Community Room Richmond Public Library
325 Civic Center Plaza (near Macdonald Ave. & 27th)



Sponsored by United for Health Care Justice (www.united4healthcare.com) Richmond Progressive Alliance (www.richmondprogressivealliance.net), Peace & Freedom Party Contra Costa County (www.peaceandfreedom.org) For further information contact (925) 798-3698

events are listed on
Info on Public Events
[RPA Calendar](#)
If you want your event listed send it to
RPAactivist@gmail.com

RPA Activist Info

is for Richmond community members who want to be active in taking on the problems of the environment, racism, joblessness, housing, and crime to create a healthy Richmond. We believe that community involvement means more than voting every two years. It means regular communication with the candidates we elect, letting them know our issues and positions, supporting them as they try to take our issues forward. It means we attend meetings, use the email, phone our neighbors, or go on marches building an organized movement to create real change.

Comments and columns are welcome. Articles and columns are the views of the author, unsigned text the views of the editor, and not necessarily those of the RPA. Send photos, articles, and comments to RPAactivist@gmail.com or call 510-595-4661

Casinos in Point Molate: 3 Views

On Monday, January 11, four members of the City Council voted to extend a critical deadline to keep the Casino project at Point Molate alive. Battles between those who want jobs, health, and beauty in our city versus those who care only for development for profit is a constant in our city.

But now we also have a difference among progressives about how to carry on these battles. In this issue we have viewpoints by three leading Richmond Progressives, Gayle McLaughlin describes her alternative vision for Richmond, Andres Soto discusses political forces, and Tony Sustak explains why environmentalists consider Plan B. A fourth, Michael Beer expresses his opinion with political art.

[Click Here to see this discussion.](#)

“Politicians cave in to interests for a San Francisco Bay shore casino”



New Developments in Chevron EIR Dispute

The Contra Costa Building Trades, and the legal challengers of the Chevron expansion Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have agreed on a possible framework for ending the current dispute. The Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), West County Toxics Coalition, (WCTC), and Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Earth Justice, the California State Attorney General's Office and the Building Trades have agreed on a proposal to put forward to Chevron.

The proposal drops the "Cap the Crude" demand to limit the "heaviness" of crude to its current level. Instead it would allow a heavier crude to the 28 API level (but not tar sands) Other features of the proposal include

- ◆ 20% reduction in fossil fuel per barrel use (reducing green house gasses) by 2020
- ◆ Emission reduction by replacing old equipment and expanding to handle emissions from unplanned shut-down
- ◆ Specification for monitoring and reporting for several chemicals
- ◆ Increased flare gas recovery
- ◆ 15 megawatts solar voltaic at the refinery
- ◆ 15 megawatts installed in the community on low income homes

This is a joint proposal which can put the environmental groups and the Building Trades on the same side. It would increase protection for the community and provide a basis for restarting the project and putting construction workers back on the job. It is not a deal-- Chevron has not responded yet. There is some speculation that because of the international economic climate, Chevron is in no hurry to restart the project.

In the meantime, the EIR law suit by the environmental groups is still in the courts and a hearing is expected very soon. CBE, WTC, and APEN are calling for community support

Community planning meeting January 20th, 6 pm, APEN, 37th and Barrett

Community mobilization February 2nd, 5:00 pm at Richmond City Council to ensure a win that benefits the Richmond community and beyond

For More Information call Jessica Tovar or Ana Orozco at CBE 510-302-0430 www.cbecal.org

Haiti

Dear friends, sisters and brothers in the human family--

Many people have asked me what they can do besides send money to help the people of Haiti. Here are a few things.

Contact your Congressperson and say basic humanity demands that the US:

Immediately blanket Port-au-Prince with constant helicopter drops throughout the city with massive amounts of water, food and supplies. Drop the bundles if there is no space to land. This should have happened already several days ago. Haven't we learned from Katrina?

Rather than have US military control aid distribution, let Haitians distribute aid themselves. They will share. There are Haitian doctors on the ground, but they need medicine.

Grant TPS status in the US to Haitians who need to be evacuated from the country.

Immediately cancel all of Haiti's debt to international financial institutions. All revenue in Haiti from now on needs to be used to rebuild the capital, not to service foreign debts.

Insist that former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide be allowed to return to Haiti. He is in exile in South Africa and wants to return. He is more able than anyone to bring stability to the country in this crisis.

Attend emergency vigil 1/18 at 5:00pm at Oakland Federal Bldg. with Barbara Lee (www.haitisolidarity.net) for info)

Educate yourself about Haiti's history and the broader context that has led to so much suffering in Haiti today.

Do consider giving money, as that will give Haitians more flexibility to use it for what is needed most. Even if it's a very small amount, it will add up. Ti piti narive (Haitian Creole, "little by little we'll get there").

I continue to recommend Haiti Emergency Relief Fund <http://www.haitiaction.net/About/HERF/HERF.html>

The 1989 world series earthquake in SF-Oakland, which collapsed the Nimitz Freeway, and busted the Bay Bridge was centered near Santa Cruz. It was 7.1 or 7.0 The Haiti quake was 7.0

63 people died in 1989. Something like 2000 times as many died in Haiti.

While earthquakes are natural, their consequences in poor countries are unnatural--the result of economic power and U.S. foreign policy.

-MP

--Marilyn Langlois
Haiti Emergency Relief
Fund Board member