



**Migration & Environmental Injustices:**  
*Linking our neighborhoods and migration patterns  
to the environment to learn about oppression and  
become active agents of change.*

**Curriculum Ideas & Multimodal Text Set:**

**Regional Focuses:**

Exide (Vernon) & Quemetco (SGV)

## Essential Questions:

- How does my family's migration shape where I live?
- How does my environment affect my community?



## Other Questions:



- To what extent is my community toxic?
- What are ways to mitigate the toxicity of my community?
- What are the causes of the environmental risk factors in my neighborhood?

## Purpose:

- Provide environmental justice books that focus on BIPOC people's herstories and journeys.
- Provide books on change & how to take action.





## Important Things to Note:

- Although, I predominantly focused on particular regions that are important to me for various reasons, I still gathered general resources that educators could use in their classrooms as starting points and conversation starters.
- Hopefully, you and your students will have the opportunity to further investigate your own community's environmental issues and develop possible solutions.

## Ask questions:

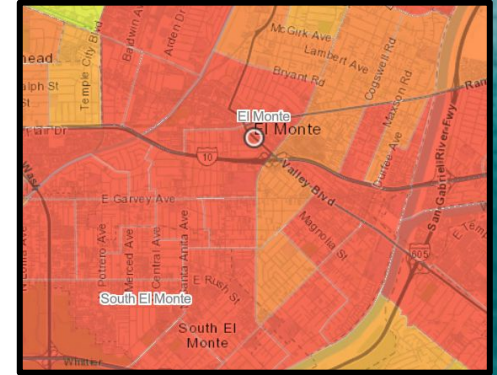
- Why is this facility here? (Why are these facilities here?)
- To what extent, are they polluting my community?
- What health risks are affiliated with these pollutants?
- Who's benefiting from this facility?
- Who is at greatest risk?



# How to read the Cal Enviro Screen?

## CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

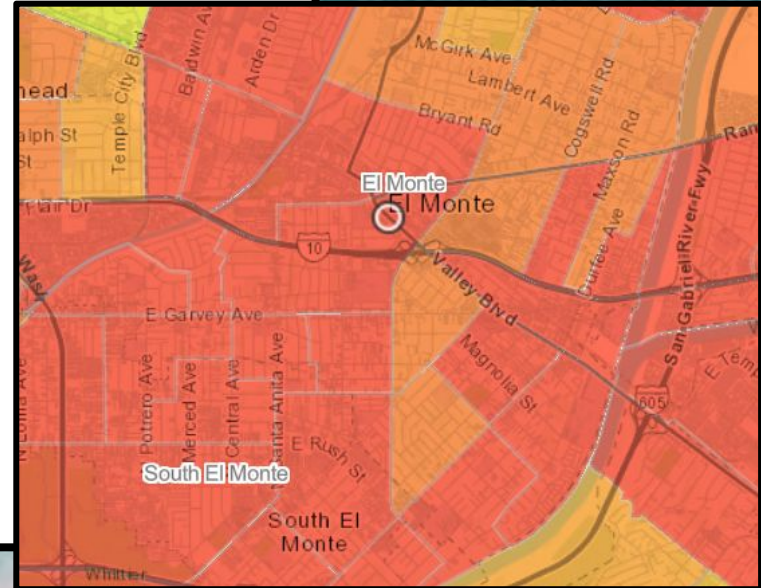
- 1) Click the [link](#)
- 2) Click the search button (magnifying glass icon) 
- 3) Enter the address or place you are interested in researching
- 4) I researched El Monte, CA (the city where I work).



# How to read the Cal Enviro Screen?

## CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

- 1) Analyze the colors
- 2) Use the key/colors to see what they mean





# How to read the Cal Enviro Screen?

- 1) Click on the region you are interested in to learn more about the specific pollutants in the area

Census Tract: 6037433403	
(Population: 4,882)	
The results for each indicator range from 0-100 and represent the percentile ranking of census tract 6037433403 relative to other census tracts.	
<b>Overall Percentiles</b>	
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile	89
Pollution Burden Percentile	96
Population Characteristics Percentile	69
<b>Exposures</b>	
Ozone	74
Particulate Matter 2.5	79
Diesel Particulate Matter	87
Toxic Releases	81
Traffic	77
Pesticides	0
Drinking Water	95

Lead from Housing	94
<b>Environmental Effects</b>	
Cleanup Sites	89
Groundwater Threats	95
Hazardous Waste	70
Impaired Waters	33
Solid Waste	59
<b>Sensitive Populations</b>	
Asthma	55
Low Birth Weight	60
Cardiovascular Disease	41
<b>Socioeconomic Factors</b>	

## Overview of the Multimodal Text Set- the background/why

A few years ago, I moved into a new community, coincidentally still close to my childhood hometown. As I settled into my new environment, I discovered that I lived near

## Table of Contents: (Texts)

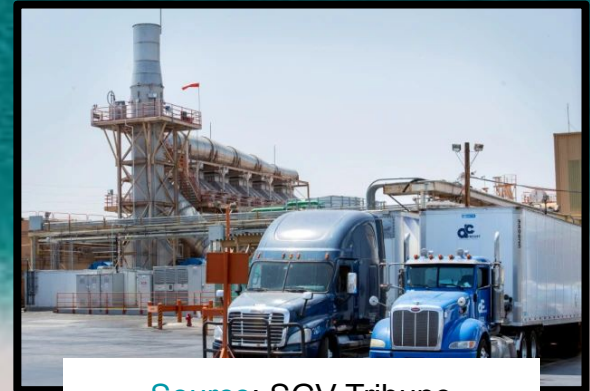
- 1) Articles (broadcast journalism, newspapers/magazines)
- 2) Books
- 3) Songs/music
- 4) Podcasts/interviews
- 5) Videos
- 6) Photography (social media, graphs, etc.)

# Articles: Part A (SGV, Avocado Heights, Quemetco)

- 1) [Quemetco battery recycler in City of Industry to pay \\$2.3M fine, fix problems – Daily News](#)
- 2) [Quemetco Contamination | Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#)
- 3) [Hacienda Heights community meeting to focus on controversial Quemetco settlement – San Gabriel Valley Tribune](#)



Source: Daily News



Source: SGV Tribune



# Articles/news: Part B (Los Angeles, Vernon, "Exide")

- 1) [Do you live near the old Exide lead-acid battery smelter? Check your property's cleanup status](#)
- 2) [Former Exide Battery Recycling Facility, Vernon, California | US EPA](#)
- 3) [Exide allowed to abandon Vernon battery recycling plant: taxpayers to foot cleanup bill - ABC7 Los Angeles](#)



Exide Technologies battery recycling plant located in Vernon. (Al Seib/Los Angeles Times)



EMBED <> MORE VIDEOS ▶

As of early January 2020, lead-contaminated soil at 1,537 Vernon-area homes have been cleaned since the Exide battery plant was shutdown nearly five years ago. Over 8,000 homes were flagged with lead and need to be cleaned.

←  
[Source:](#)  
ABC 7



Former Exide Facility at 2700 South Indiana Avenue, Vernon, CA.

[Source:](#) EPA



# Articles/news: Part B (Los Angeles, Vernon, "Exide" cont...)

- 1) [Lead Found in Children in Communities Near Former Exide Battery Plant in Vernon: USC Study | KTLA](#)

Excerpt from the article is found below.



Source: KTLA 5

Anyone who lives within the 1.7-mile radius of the Exide plant can contact DTSC to have soil testing conducted at 844-225-3887. More information can be found on [Assemblymember Santiago's website](#).

Area residents may also obtain free blood tests to determine lead contamination. Contact the county's [Department of Public Health](#) at 844-888-2290.

# Articles/news: Part C (Environmental Article #1)

**Resource:** Newsela (*some articles are free but some can only be accessed through a Premium account*).

**Tip:** Reading level can be adjusted. (There are writing prompts, comprehension questions, and vocabulary).

## “What is environmental justice?”

- a) Lexile levels: Max, 1230L, 1090L, 900L, & 610L
- b) AI-generated suggestions for lesson content/inspiration from “Newsela.”
  - i) **Main Idea:** The article is about the environmental justice movement, which works to promote fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in decisions concerning the environment.
  - ii) **Key Themes:**
    - (1) Fair Treatment
    - (2) Meaningful Involvement
    - (3) Environmental Pollution



Protesters against the Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone XL Pipeline hold a sit-in in the street next to the San Francisco Federal Building in January 2017. Demonstrations against these pipelines are part of the present-day fight for environmental justice, protesters say. Photo by: Wikimedia/Public Domain

By Gale, Cengage Learning, Gale, Cengage Learning, adapted by Newsela staff

Source: Newsela

# Articles/news: Part C (Environmental Article #2)

**Resource:** Newsela (*some articles are free but some can only be accessed through a Premium account*).

**Tip:** Reading level can be adjusted. (There are writing prompts, comprehension questions, and vocabulary).

## "A small town is taking on the state's landfill"

- a) Lexile levels: Max, 1170L, 1040L, 820L, 600L
- b) AI-generated suggestions for lesson content/inspiration from "Newsela."
  - i) **Main Idea:** The article is about the debate surrounding a proposed landfill expansion in Southbridge, Massachusetts and how it reflects a nationwide trend of landfills disproportionately located in low-income communities.
  - ii) **Key Themes:** \* Environmental Injustice \* Community Empowerment \* Quality of Life



Landfill manager Thomas Cue looks out over Massachusetts' largest landfill, in Southbridge.  
Photo by: Story Hinckley, Christian Science Monitor

By Story Hinckley, Christian Science Monitor, Christian Science Monitor, adapted by Newsela staff

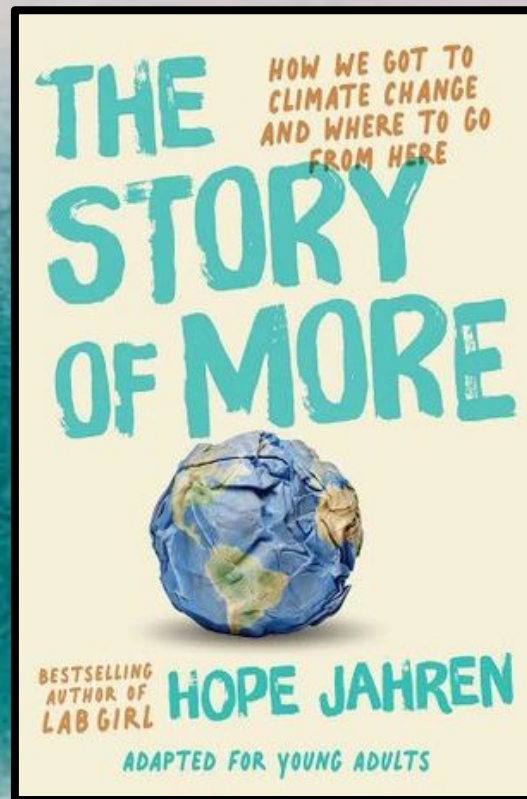
Source: Newsela

# Books: Environmental Justice

Hope Jahren, acclaimed geochemist and geobiologist, details the science behind key inventions, clarifying how electricity, large-scale farming, and automobiles have both helped and harmed our world.

Jahren explains the current and projected consequences of unchecked global warming, from superstorms to rising sea levels, resulting from the unprecedented amounts of greenhouse gases being released into our atmosphere. The links between human consumption habits and our endangered existence are very real, with consequences leading to a crossroads of survival and extinction.

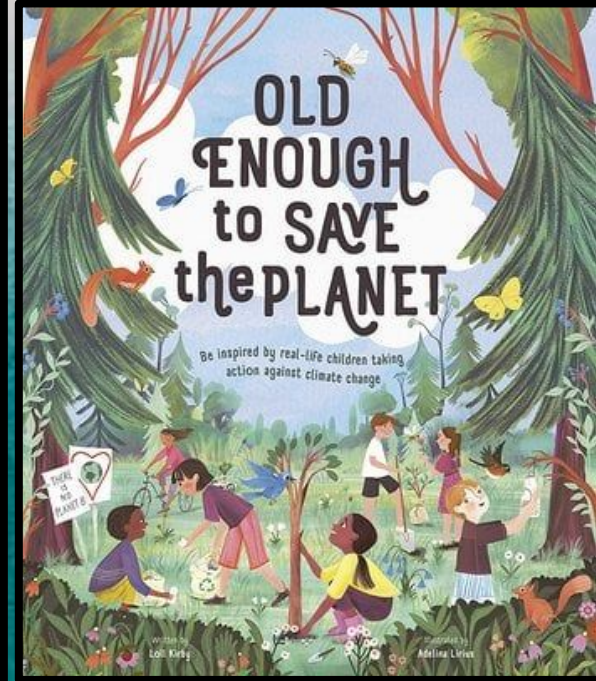
Still, Jahren maintains that our ever-broadening science-based knowledge can help us counter this dilemma. The eye-opening information provided in *The Story of More* will help readers understand the path we must take. If we collectively make informed choices now, Jahren reassures us, our future can be as bright as we imagine it can be.





# Books: Environmental Justice

The world is facing a climate crisis like we've never seen before. And kids around the world are stepping up to raise awareness and try to save the planet. As people saw in the youth climate strike in September 2019, kids will not stay silent about this subject—they're going to make a change. Meet 12 young activists from around the world who are speaking out and taking action against climate change. Learn about the work they do and the challenges they face, and discover how the future of our planet starts with each and every one of us.

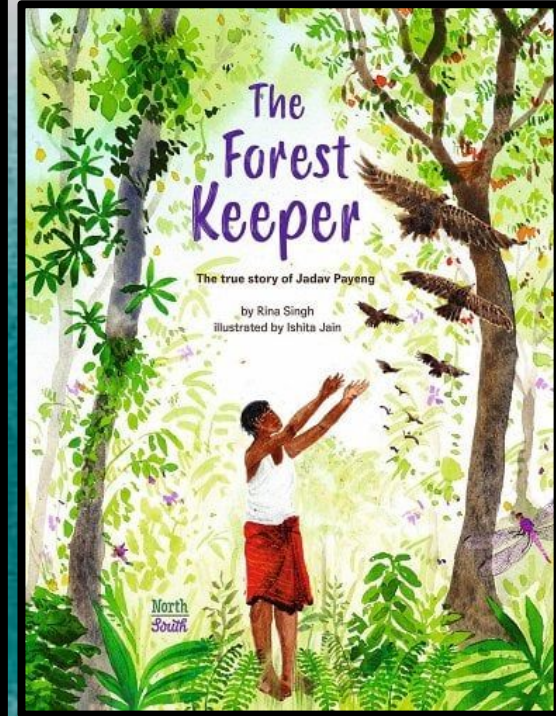




# Books: Environmental Justice

What can one person do in the face of global environmental degradation? Indian Jadav Payeng has proven that each and every one of us can make a difference. As a boy, he began planting trees on a sandbank in the state of Assam. Nobody believed that he would succeed in doing so. But since 1979, a forest the size of Central Park has emerged, offering a home to countless animals and plants. It was not until 2007 that a photographer accidentally discovered the forest and made Payeng known to the world beyond India.

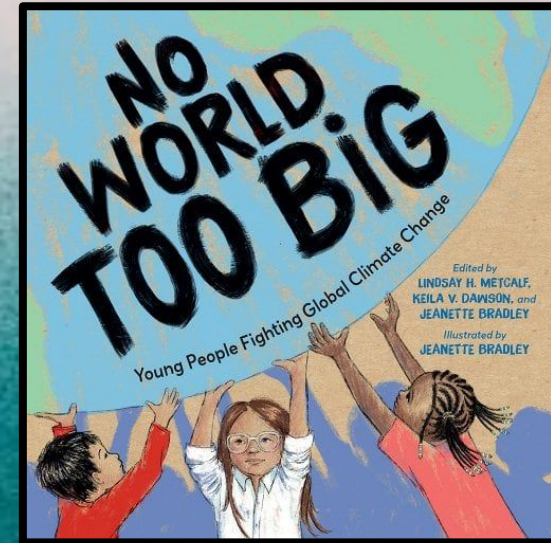
Rina Singh has sensitively retraced the story of young Jadav. In Ishita Jain's picture book debut as illustrator, readers feel immersed in the spectacular habitat whose existence borders on a miracle come true.



# Books: Environmental Justice

Climate change impacts everyone, but the future belongs to young people. *No World Too Big* celebrates twelve young activists and three activist groups on front lines of the climate crisis who have planted trees in Uganda, protected water in Canada, reduced school-bus climate footprint in Indonesia, invented alternate power sources in Ohio, and more.

Fourteen poems by Vanessa Brantley-Newton, David Bowles, Rajani LaRocca, Renée LaTulippe, Heidi E. Y. Stemple, and others honor activists from all over the world and the United States. Additional text goes into detail about each activist's life and how readers can get involved.



# Books: Environmental Justice

Warmer temperatures. Fires in the Amazon. Superstorms. These are just some of the effects of climate change that we are already experiencing.

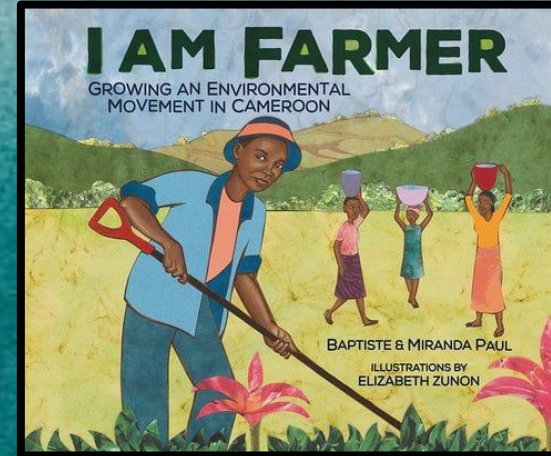
The good news is that we can all do something about it. A movement is already underway to combat not only the environmental effects of climate change but also to fight for climate justice and make a fair and livable future possible for everyone. And young people are not just part of that movement, they are leading the way. They are showing us that this moment of danger is also a moment of great opportunity—an opportunity to change everything.

Full of empowering stories of young leaders all over the world, this information-packed book from award-winning journalist and one of the foremost voices for climate justice, Naomi Klein, offers young readers a comprehensive look at the state of the climate today and how we got here, while also providing the tools they need to join this fight to protect and reshape the planet they will inherit.



## Books: Environmental Justice

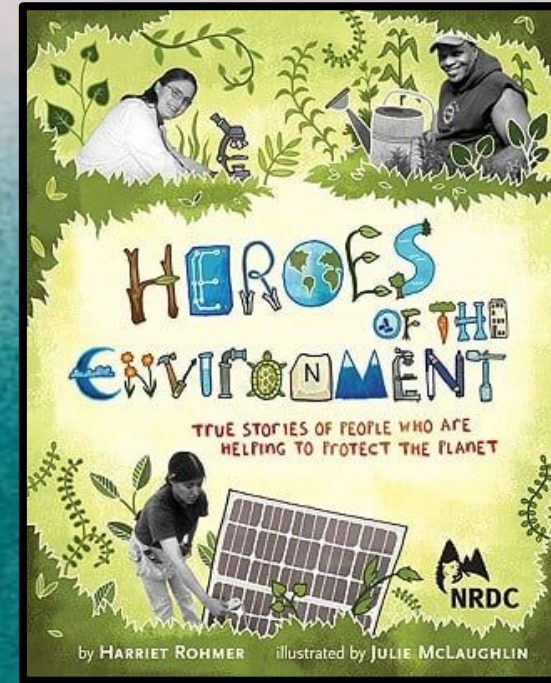
When Tantoh Nforba was a child, his fellow students mocked him for his interest in gardening. Today he's an environmental hero, bringing clean water and bountiful gardens to the central African nation of Cameroon. Authors Miranda Paul and Baptiste Paul share Farmer Tantoh's inspiring story.





# Books: Environmental Justice

This inspiring book presents the true stories of 12 people from across North America who have done great things for the environment. Heroes include a teenage girl who figured out how to remove an industrial pollutant from the Ohio River, a Mexican superstar wrestler who works to protect turtles and whales, and a teenage boy from Rhode Island who helped his community and his state develop effective e-waste recycling programs. Plenty of photographs and illustrations bring each compelling story vividly to life.





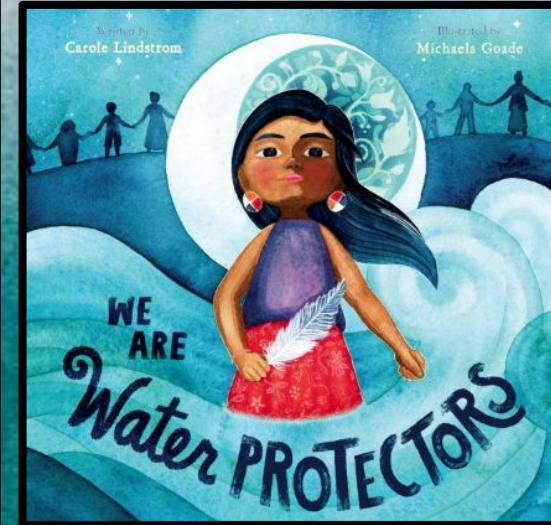
# Books: Environmental Justice

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, *We Are Water Protectors* issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption—a bold and lyrical picture book written by Carole Lindstrom and vibrantly illustrated by Michaela Goade.

*Water is the first medicine.*

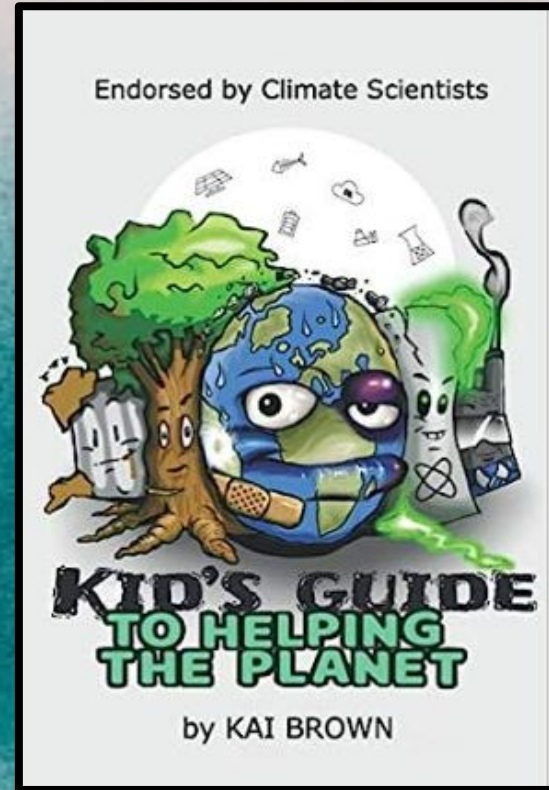
*It affects and connects us all . . .*

When a black snake threatens to destroy the Earth  
And poison her people's water, one young water protector  
Takes a stand to defend Earth's most sacred resource.



## Books: Environmental Justice

Established author of the Kid's Guide series has published his latest book to teach children and young adults about matters impacting our planet. This book is an easy, educational, and fun read. It discusses the topic from a young adults perspective with meaningful calls to action. The book discusses topics such as: pollution, deforestation, biodiversity, climate change, wildfires, and much more.



# Books: Activism & Action

1)



# Books: Activism & Action

1)






# Songs/music:

*Feels like Summer* by Childish Gambino

“In ‘Feels Like Summer,’ he uses his lyrics to stress the initiative people need to combat climate change. ‘Feels Like Summer’ has a certain coolness to its instrumentals that oppose Glover's lyrics about Earth's rapid population growth, animal extinction, and societal power dynamics.”

[Source](#): Smith College

Raps Lyrics

A person with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark jacket, stands in front of a house at night. The house has a gabled roof and a window. The scene is dimly lit, with the person's face partially visible. The text is overlaid on the image.

You can feel it in the streets  
On a day like this, the heat  
It feel like summer

## Songs/music:

*Stand Up/Stand N Rock* by  
Taboo

A social justice song about Indigenous Resistance, specifically the Standing Rock Sioux Nation protests that occurred in 2016 against the oil Dakota Access Pipeline.



## Songs/music:

### *Don't Go Near the Water* by The Beach Boys

A critique of human pollution on the environment such as bodies of water. The musicians warn us to be cautious and to avoid the water.



# Videos: News coverage about Exide, lead battery smelter, that was shut down



**Source:** KCAL News "Bankruptcy Settlement Allows Exide To Abandon Battery Recycling Plant In Vernon, Leaves State..."



**Source:** PBS SoCal "Lead Poisoning from LA Battery Recycling Plant– Studio SoCal"



# Videos: News coverage about Exide, lead battery smelter, that was shut down



**Source:** KCAL News "Cleanup Nowhere Near Finished at Exide Battery-Recycling Facility"

# Videos: Quemetco filmed at night

Source:

From [Boom](#) article “Kinship & Cultural Resistance to Environmental Racism in Avocado Heights, California.”

*Courtesy of Avocado Heights Vaquerxs*



## Videos: South Coast Air Quality Management District Mtg. (Public Comment)

April 7, 2023

A local resident, activist, and member of the CAC (Clean Air Coalition) spoke during public comment regarding the emissions and issues related to Quemetco.

Source: recorded by me





# Photography



Cyclists arrive at a stop on Fifth Ave and Lomitas Ave to hear an activist speak on a toxic tour in Avocado Heights. [Credit: Chris Greenspon/Streeblog](#)

# Photography



From [Boom](#) article "Kinship & Cultural Resistance to Environmental Racism in Avocado Heights, California."  
Courtesy of Avocado Heights Vaquerxs



# Photography



Annual Easter/Pascua Cabalgata/political outreach event as well in 2022.  
Courtesy of Daniel Ruiz-Camacho