



Election Results: A Victory for Prevention

LCHC took an “Oppose” position on Propositions 23 this election. Proposition 23 would have effectively repealed AB 32, California’s comprehensive green house gas (GHG) reduction law, by suspending it until unemployment fell to 5.5 per cent or less for three consecutive calendar quarters. This measure started as Assembly Bill 118 authored by Assembly Member Dan Logue (R-Chico). It had a relatively short legislative life and died in its first committee hearing. A substantial portion of the language of the bill was then recycled and used to draft Proposition 23. Oil refineries spent millions in an effort to get this measure passed. This could be because eight of the top ten GHG emitters in California are oil refineries. More importantly, most of them are adjacent to communities of color. We are pleased to say that this measure was soundly defeated.

Organizing Communities of Color

LCHC partnered with other organizations under the name Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Proposition in a campaign opposing Proposition 23. While Election Day exit polls regarding the ballot measures have not been released, pre-election exit polls showed that people of color were inclined to vote “No” on 23. What is evident however is that Communities United engaged in an aggressive campaign that led to the most lopsided vote of any of the propositions; 61.5% voted “No” and 38.5% voted “Yes”.

LCHC’s Focus On Air Quality

LCHC was primarily focused on educating voters of color about how this measure would have worsened pollution. At issue were the co pollutants that accompany GHG emissions, such as PM₁₀. Some of these co pollutants have been linked to asthma and underdeveloped lungs among children. Recent reports have also shown that poor air quality increases healthcare costs. These costs are the result of compromised lung capacity due to the stress placed on them by airborne pollutants. As noted, communities of color are disproportionately adjacent to these facilities and therefore suffer more from the effects of poor air quality caused by co pollutant emissions.

Effect on Latinos

With 37% of the population, Latinos represent the largest block in communities of color. Ensuring that GHG and co pollutant emissions are controlled reduces their affect by limiting exposure to them. This resounding rejection of Proposition 23 represents a significant stride toward improved messaging focused on the importance of prevention. LCHC hopes to take advantage of the momentum created during this election to further prevention efforts. As well LCHC will be assessing and determining what elements of the campaign worked most effectively to help frame future discussions and outreach efforts focused on prevention. By doing this, we can help to create policies that reduce the health threats posed by poor air quality. This in turn, can prevent health costs from increasing due to pollution related health events.

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