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New “GAFs Gotta Go” Campaign Targets West Dallas’ Largest Polluter and Launches Biggest Environmental Justice Battle since 90’s Smelter Fight

Residents assemble citywide alliance to take on Fortune 500 giant and force its asphalt shingle factory to move out of their neighborhood

(Dallas) –Initiating Dallas’ most ambitious anti-pollution campaign in 30 years, a new neighborhood association is telling the huge factory operating next door since 1946 that its now “gotta go.”

“This is about our basic rights to breathe clean air,” said community leader **Janie Cisneros**. **We don’t want to be worried for our families’ health because of where we live. GAF must move.”**

Formed only two months ago Cisneros’ group **Singleton United/Unidos** is the first organized association of central Singleton residents and it doesn’t lack in determination. It’s “GAFs Gotta Go” campaign mission is “to remove GAF from the Singleton Corridor because it is the largest source of pollution in West Dallas and is threatening the health, safety and general welfare of the residents”. Singleton United/Unidos will be giving GAF, **Dallas County’s largest polluter of Sulfur Dioxide and its 4th largest Particulate Matter polluter, an ultimatum to leave of its own accord or face forced eviction through a municipal zoning process known as amortization.**

It’s the same process the City of Dallas used to force the RSR lead smelter, which operated only a few blocks east of GAF, to permanently close in the early 1980’s.

In taking on the David Vs Goliath task of dislodging an established industrial polluter from the inner city, SingletonUnited/Unidos has drafted a citywide alliance of groups to help them, including **Downwinders at Risk, Education Opens Doors, Neighbors United/Vecinos Unidos, JOLT Action, Neighborhood Self-Defense Project, Readers 2 Leaders, Somas Tejas, Southern Sector Rising, Sunrise Movement Dallas, Acadia Community Coalition, Solidarity Latinos, Texas Campaign for the Environment, Sierra Club Beyond Coal, North Texas Fair Housing Coalition, West Dallas Coalition for Environmental Justice, and the Westmoreland Heights and Ledbetter Eagleford West Dallas neighborhood associations.** Residents of the **Dallas Housing Authority’s Kingbridge Apartments** received permission from the agency to use its land directly across from GAF to host a campaign billboard.

According to the City of Dallas Municipal Code, the amortization process can be triggered by the City itself, **or by any resident with a \$1000 filing fee.** A hearing is held and a business can be forced to move if evidence demonstrates it’s a bad fit for the neighborhood, including **“the extent to which continued operation of the use may threaten public health or safety, the environmental impacts, and the extent to which public disturbances may be created or perpetuated by continued operation.”**

Singleton United/Unidos encompasses residents who live to the east, west, and north of GAF’s sprawling factory. They say GAF is already in violation of those criteria. Deborah Culberson, a longtime resident and leader at the Kingbridge Apartments testified **“I’ve lived here for 30 years and the pollution has only gotten worse. I can’t sit out on my porch without coughing or my eyes watering”**

On Wednesday, campaign letters went out to a variety of public officials at all levels of government seeking appointments and information. There are already plans to **host asthma screenings for**

residents and mount a widespread community education and awareness effort. According to Culberson and Cisneros, **the goal is to provide a fact-based foundation for moving against GAF by the end of the year.**

“Every day the GAF factory continues to operate is one more day we have to breathe its pollution and live with a constant threat of an explosion”, said Cisneros. ***“Enough is enough. It’s time for GAF to go”.***

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