

CounterStream

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**BLACK
APPALACHIAN
COALITION**
• OUR ROOTS RUN DEEP •

SOLID ARITY

RIDE **CONVERGENCE, RESURGENCE, HEALING & JUSTICE**

CURRICULUM

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH THE



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

1. Submit Your Complaint: First, ensure that your complaint has been submitted through the appropriate channels, such as the EPA's Environmental Violations Form or the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline ➡ www.echo.epa.gov/report-environmental-violations

2. Obtain Confirmation: After submitting your complaint, you should receive a confirmation number or acknowledgment from the EPA. This number is crucial for tracking your complaint.

3. Use Online Tracking Tools: The EPA provides various online tools and resources where you can check the status of your complaint. You may need to visit specific sections of their website related to complaints and enforcement actions. ➡ www.echo.epa.gov/

4. Contact EPA Directly: If online tracking is not available or if you need more detailed information, consider contacting the EPA directly via phone or email. Provide them with your confirmation number and any relevant details about your complaint.

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5. Follow Up Regularly: Keep track of any updates or communications from the EPA regarding your complaint. Regular follow-ups can help ensure that your issue is being addressed.

6. Review Case Outcomes: Once a resolution has been reached, you may be able to view case outcomes or enforcement actions taken by the EPA related to your complaint through their Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) system.

7. Meet with your local Congressional Representative:

Congressional representatives often have local offices in their districts where constituents can meet with staff members. You can find the addresses and phone numbers of these offices through the representative's website or by calling the U.S. House switchboard at (202) 224-3121. You can also locate your representative here 

www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative

By following these steps, you can effectively track the progress of your complaint within the EPA's system.



CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

Contacting your state, local, and federal level representatives to voice your concerns about petrochemical plants in your community is another way to advocate for change.

Not sure who represents you? Find that information here →

www.usa.gov/elected-officials

Not sure what to say? Try using this script as a guide ↓

*Hi, my name is **[NAME]** and I'm a constituent from **[CITY, ZIP]**.*

*I'm calling to urge **[REP/SEN NAME]** about important health concern regarding **[FACILITY NAME]**.*

[WRITE OR SPEAK TO YOUR UNIQUE CONCERNS]

[WRITE WHAT ACTION YOU WOULD LIKE THE REP TO TAKE]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

IF LEAVING VOICEMAIL

Please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied.

GLOSSARY

Ammonia:

Ammonia (NH₃) is a colorless gas with a very distinct odor that both occurs in nature and is commercially produced. About 80% of industry-produced ammonia is used in agriculture as fertilizer, despite its grave health risks. These risks include respiratory irritation, lung damage, skin burns, long term health complications, and even death.

BLAC (Black Appalachia Coalition):

[The Black Appalachian Coalition](#) (BLAC) amplifies Black voices, dismantles the colonized narrative of Appalachia, and uses story-based strategies and solutions that center the voices and lived experiences of Black Appalachians.

Blue Ammonia:

Often viewed as a sustainable alternative to traditional ammonia, blue ammonia refers to ammonia (NH₃) that is produced through a process that aims to reduce the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with traditional ammonia production methods. But the health risks associated with blue ammonia are largely similar to those of conventional ammonia, as the chemical properties remain unchanged regardless of how it is produced.

Blue Hydrogen:

Blue hydrogen is a type of hydrogen produced through a process that involves extracting hydrogen from methane gas (natural gas) while capturing and storing the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated during this process. While blue hydrogen is presented as a cleaner alternative within the energy sector, its production raises serious public health concerns due to increased air pollution, risks associated with industrial operations, transportation hazards, harmful combustion emissions, and contributions to climate change. These factors collectively threaten community health and well-being.

Cancer Alley:

Cancer Alley is a roughly 85-mile area along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, where numerous communities coexist alongside around 200 fossil fuel and petrochemical facilities. The risk of cancer in the corridor is 95% higher than in most of the country. ([Human Rights Watch](#)).

Cancer Belt (Carcinogenic Coast):

The Cancer Belt Gulf refers to a region along the upper Texas Gulf Coast, characterized by a high concentration of petrochemical plants and refineries. This area is associated with elevated rates of cancer and other health issues among local populations due to exposure to hazardous pollutants emitted by these industrial facilities.

Decolonizing:

In the context of the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#), "decolonizing" refers to dismantling the legacy of colonialism and its impact on human rights, focusing on issues like self-determination, systemic inequalities, and the need for inclusive and equitable systems.

Ethylene Cracker:

An ethylene cracker is a large, industrial facility that processes ethane, a component of natural gas, by heating it to high temperatures to "crack" its molecular bonds and produce ethylene. Ethylene serves as a fundamental building block for various plastic products and other industrial materials. The process involves separating ethane from natural gas, then using extreme heat (often exceeding 1,500°F) to break down the ethane into smaller molecules, primarily ethylene and propylene. These products are then further processed into resins used in manufacturing plastics. Their operation poses significant health risks for nearby communities due to toxic emissions that can affect respiratory health, increase cancer risks, impact cardiovascular systems, and harm reproductive health among other concerns.

Fifth Ward "Cancer Cluster":

Fifth Ward is a historically significant neighborhood located northeast of downtown Houston, Texas. It has a rich cultural heritage and has been predominantly inhabited by African American and Hispanic communities. The area has faced numerous socio-economic challenges over the years, including poverty, limited access to healthcare, and environmental issues. The term "Cancer Cluster" refers to a statistically significant increase in cancer cases within a specific geographic area over a defined period. In the case of Houston's Fifth Ward, this cluster has been linked to environmental contamination from historical industrial activities.

Food Insecurity:

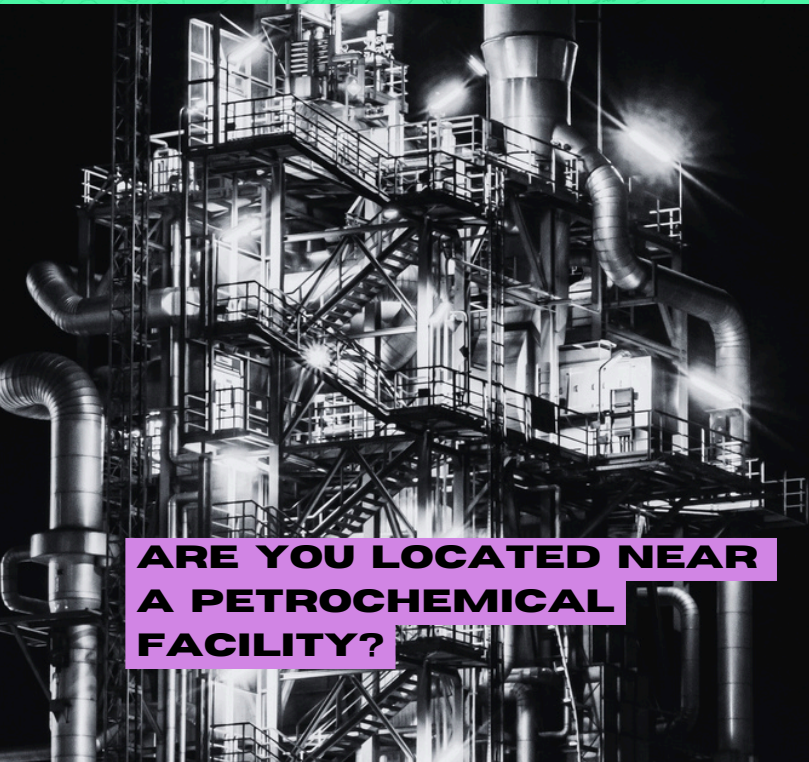
Food insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition characterized by limited or uncertain access to adequate food.

Food Literacy Project:

[The Food Literacy Project](#) is an organization dedicated to using food and farming as tools for personal growth and social change. Founded in 2006, FLP engages young people through various educational programs that focus on food, nutrition, environmental education, leadership, employment opportunities, and community engagement. The project aims to inspire youth to become change agents within their families and communities by fostering a deeper understanding of the food system.



Photo by Jon Cherry



**ARE YOU LOCATED NEAR
A PETROCHEMICAL
FACILITY?**

The state generating the most amount of energy from both natural gas and coal is Texas.

Petrochemical production, which is expected to account for over a third of global oil demand growth by 2030, takes the form of chemical plants, ethylene crackers, and natural gas liquid pipelines on [this map](#), largely concentrated in the Gulf Coast:

Find facilities near your address using [this interactive map](#).

Freedom Rides:

Freedom Riders were groups of civil rights activists who participated in bus trips through the American South in 1961 to defeat inequality and Jim Crow. Leaning on the essence of Freedom Rides, Solidarity Rides are experiences led by Environmental Justice leaders to bring together allies on a bus to come face-to-face with environmental injustices in their communities. Check out the [PBS film, Freedom Riders](#).

Freeport, Texas:

Freeport is a deepwater port three miles from the mouth of the Brazos River on the Gulf of Mexico. It is home to Dow Chemical Company's largest single manufacturing site in the 21st century.

Hurricane Beryl:

Hurricane Beryl was a significant and destructive tropical cyclone that occurred during the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season. It was notable for several reasons, including its rapid intensification and record-breaking status. The United States experienced severe flooding and wind damage, particularly in Texas, where at least 42 deaths were confirmed.

Narrative Justice:

Narrative justice is a concept that emphasizes the importance of storytelling in shaping perceptions of justice and injustice within society. It involves recognizing and addressing the power dynamics inherent in narratives, particularly those that have historically marginalized certain voices while amplifying others.



Non-Attainment Ozone Layer:

In U.S. environmental law, non-attainment refers to areas where air quality does not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These standards are designed to protect public health and welfare from harmful pollutants, including ground-level ozone.

Orphan Wells:

Orphan wells are inactive oil and gas wells that have been abandoned by their operators. In Freeport and Brazoria County, Texas, these wells pose significant environmental and safety concerns due to their potential to leak harmful substances into the surrounding ecosystem.

Rubbertown (Louisville, Kentucky):

Rubbertown is a neighborhood in Louisville, Kentucky, known for its heavy industrial manufacturing plants and significant environmental challenges. Located along the Ohio River, Rubbertown emerged during World War II as a center for synthetic rubber production and other chemical manufacturing due to the urgent need for materials for the war effort. The area has since become synonymous with industrial pollution and health concerns affecting local residents.

Tax Abatements:

Tax abatements are reductions or exemptions on the level of taxation faced by individuals or businesses. Tax abatements significantly impact the petrochemical industry in Brazoria County by providing financial incentives that attract large industrial projects, but they also raise concerns about public costs and environmental consequences.

West Louisville Life Expectancy:

It has been reported that life expectancy in West Louisville is approximately 65 years. This figure starkly contrasts with life expectancy rates in more affluent areas of Louisville, particularly in the East End, where residents live on average over 15 years longer than those in West Louisville. For instance, life expectancy in the East End is around 80 years.

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A FILM BY MICHAEL MCKENZIE

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SUPPORT PROVIDED BY BEYOND PETROCHEMICALS JACOB & TERESE HERSHEY FOUNDATION OXFAM AMERICA PLASTIC SOLUTIONS FUND

SPECIAL THANKS BEAR FRUIT & GROW BLACK APPALACHIAN COALITION EARTHWORKS FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH ANGLETON, TEXAS

FOOD LITERACY PROJECT FREEPORT HAVEN S.A.F.E. DIVERSITY COMMUNITIES TEXAS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT