



AT RANCHO SAN ANTONIO

**To: Thu Bui, Senior Air Quality Engineer**  
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**Subject: The Forum at Rancho San Antonio to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District on the Proposed Renewal Title V Permit for Lehigh Southwest Cement Company**

The Forum at Rancho San Antonio is a unique resident-owned retirement community of roughly 741 residents and staff members. There are about 100 patients at the adjacent Healthcare Center (HCC), including both residents and private Silicon Valley patients. This HCC has been given a 5-star rating by state and federal agencies for its Superior Services. **About 1000 people, including residents, guest patients, service staff and vendors are regularly on the Forum Site and are exposed to the emissions from the adjacent cement plant, which is located approximately 2 miles Southwest.**

**A Grey Ash over the Area:**

This plant spreads a grey ash that is noticeable regularly at the HCC and Forum parking lots on cars, etc. These deposits are likely to contain many toxic pollutants. These pollutants are a serious threat especially to young children (causing neurological and pulmonary disorders). **EPA and state authorities have called for stricter emissions testing and control immediately despite possible economic consequences for cement plants.**

**Need for Testing Emissions:**

To our knowledge, the input to this plant is made up of limestone from Almaden (former source of mercury for the gold-rush miners for their panning of gold) as well as petroleum coke used as the fuel (a waste product dumped by oil refiners) that contain high concentrations of vanadium, chromium and hydrocarbons such as benzene and dioxins. Another key pollutant is the fine particle of silica contained in the limestone-rock fed to the kiln, along with dioxins, and HCl (which if ingested causes pulmonary disorders), etc. These pollutants pose a serious danger to the children at the school nearby and to seniors at the retirement community. Ingestion of fine erosive silica causes silicosis.

**Proposed Solution**

The Lehigh Plant needs to install modern Electrostatic Precipitators, backed up by bag filters that have been standard for decades in similar plants (ie coal-fired plants and cement plants, etc.). Mercury can be removed by injection of activated-charcoal which selectively adsorbs mercury and other contaminants for safe disposal or recovery. **We request that this company be required to adopt modern corrective measures to safeguard the health of the community. Lehigh should report without delay the pollutant contents of its stack emissions on a daily basis to appropriate state and federal authorities for evaluation, and make this information available for public knowledge.**

**The Forum CCRC Board of Directors**

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