

TO: Brisbane City Council

FROM: Clara Johnson

Contamination and Remediation on the Baylands

Public Hearing Comments

The issue that we all struggle with is to determine the degree of risk that those who: construct, live, work, shop or play near to or on the Baylands will take by being there. We are also trying to understand how development in the Baylands might negatively impact the environment.

Safeguards to avoid proposed developments creating a greater risk to human health and environmental quality should be paramount in the decision making process. Redundant systems or methods should be used to avoid exposure that cannot be undone.

By law, California cities must consider sea level rise when planning new developments. There are numerous dangers associated with sea level rise. There is a range of possible sea level changes which range from a meter to five meters. One study stated that salt water eats away at clay caps. Flooding and wave action threaten the mobility of sediment and it can contaminate ground water. It can cause scouring all of which can disturb contaminants and may cause them to become mobile. It may also disrupt remediation efforts. The more you read about sea level rise, the more convinced you are that local governments are reacting too slowly. Before any development is approved and built. There must be an assessment of the sea level rise' likely impacts on the specific locations and specific types contamination or type and age of landfill and the soil constituents and what the results of the assessment mean for human health and the threat to the environment.

The staff report for the public hearing of 11/17/16 states on page one, paragraph 3 line two, the issues of site management and remediation are "highly regulated at both the state and federal levels". It is true that they are regulated but the levels that are allowed any or may not protect human health effectively and the imposition of regulation on the more than 80,000 chemicals created by humans has not extended beyond a small fraction of that number. Some of the chemicals present on the Baylands may not have been studied. The reassuring wording in the report is intended to instill confidence in the reader but all it means is that they are doing their best with what may be inadequate data. The data will change as more research is done.

On page 4, full paragraph two, It states that more is known about the contamination at OU1 and OU2 than is known about the landfill. It is also true that the groundwater which is a carrier of contamination is better understood in OU1 than in OU2 because it has been studied more. The groundwater should be studied further to assure adequate protection of human health and environmental quality. The record shows that in two different instances contaminants showed up in testing but because they did not show up in later testing, they were ignored. I don't believe that this level of uncertainty is adequate protection for the public.