



## CPUC commissioner participates in 'equity tour'

By **Anthony Victoria**

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Photo/Anthony Victoria: California Public Utilities Commissioner Liane Randolph, center, visited the region on May 15 to participate in an 'equity tour' put on by the region's environmental justice groups.

Environmental groups hosted California Public Utilities Commissioner Liane Randolph Monday for an 'equity tour' that highlighted the region's challenges with air pollution and accomplishments with renewable technology.

Randolph joined members of the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice and the Sierra Club's My Generation campaign on a drive through industrial corridors in Fontana, Jurupa Valley, and Rancho Cucamonga.

The tour's first stop was the 35-acre NRG operated Etiwanda Generating Station, which serves as a backup energy source for Southern California Edison during high peak times.

Environmentalists argue the generating station does more harm than good when it operates.

"When [Etiwanda] does run, it's on high pollution days," said Matt Vespa, a senior attorney with the Sierra Club. "This is something people can't live with."

The Etiwanda generating station, which first began operations in 1962, currently emits 640 Megawatts of energy on two natural gas steam units to nearby contractors.

Vespa told Randolph that the station is labeled as retired by the California Independent System Operator, the entity that oversees the state's electric power system, transmission lines, and market generation.

"This plant could retire and not create a reliability crisis," he said.

Vespa also asserts that the plant has contributed to the already high pollution rates present in the area. The station discharges carbon pollution at a rate of over 1,500 pounds per megawatt hour (MWh), which exceeds the 1,100 pound MWh minimum performance standard set by the California Energy Commission in 2007.

"It's unacceptable to keep allowing contracts for a facility like this," said Vespa. "There are other system resources that could provide a function."

Commissioner Randolph, CCAEJ, and the Sierra Club also met with Fontana Unified School District officials to discuss solar projects that are reportedly contributing to energy savings for the area.

The school district has plans to install over 13.9 megawatts of renewable solar energy systems and 6.1 megawatts of Tesla battery energy systems at their school sites.

"We have our eyes set towards demand reduction," said Robert Copeland, Director of Maintenance and Operations/Facilities for the district.

Randolph said the information she received from the tour was "refreshing" and vowed to work with environmental justice groups to address pollution and energy issues in the Inland Empire.

"It was very informative to see the challenges the community faces," Randolph said. "I hope that we at the Public Utilities Commission can keep programs going that drive incentives to bring in renewable projects