

What is Petroleum Coke?

Petroleum coke (pet coke), is the residue left over when crude oil is refined, and is similar to coal. This product can be burned like coal and pollutes like it. This is what the Las Brisas plant wants to burn in Corpus Christi.



Why should I be worried about the proposed Las Brisas pet coke plant?

You should be concerned about the health, economic, and environmental consequences of the pollution. The draft permit issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) shows Las Brisas would become the largest polluter in Nueces County, causing a 70% increase in industrial pollution. This pollution threatens our health and ecosystems, but could also push us into nonattainment, or failure to meet the federal standards for air quality. Then, our area would lose federal funds for road construction and block grants. Emissions inspections would be mandated for every vehicle, along with vapor recovery systems and fuel additives that increase the price of fuel. Our industries would be required to cut back on their emissions and new ones may not want or be able to locate here.

What type of pollution are we talking about?

The permit application on file with TCEQ states that the Las Brisas power plant, as now proposed, will produce the following each year:

- 216 pounds of mercury
- 100 pounds of lead
- 8,096 tons of sulfur dioxide
- 10.4 million tons of carbon dioxide
- 1,767 tons of particulate matter

The Las Brisas power plant will increase industrial criteria emissions* in Nueces County to 51,484 tons annually, which is a 70% increase over 2006. Additionally, air toxics will increase by at least 2,190 tons a year of acid gases like hydrochloric acid, hydrofluoric acid, sulfuric acid, and ammonia.

* Criteria emissions are the six pollutants EPA and TCEQ use to gauge ambient air quality and to determine attainment status.

OK, but what does this all mean?

This means our *Sparkling City by the Sea* will not sparkle as brightly. The Corpus Christi area is already environmentally overburdened, officially classified as "Near Non-attainment" for air quality by TCEQ. If the Las Brisas plant is built as planned, it seems likely it would push us into nonattainment, with serious consequences to our economy as well as to our health.

How will this pollution affect health?

Lead builds up in the environment and is highly toxic in small doses. It is linked to childhood learning disabilities, which is why lead paint was banned.

Mercury exposure also is linked to learning disabilities and permanent brain damage in children, which can begin in the womb. If a pregnant woman eats mercury-contaminated fish, mercury is passed on to her baby. When mercury pollution falls into the water, it enters the food chain. Tiny amounts are dangerous and, like lead, it accumulates in the environment.

Note: Nueces County is the No. 1 county in Texas for certain types of birth defects and No. 84 in the nation.

Sulfur Dioxide / Nitric Oxide produce acid rain and irritate eyes and lungs. Exposure to sulfur dioxide or nitric oxide—even at levels currently allowed under the law—triggers asthma attacks in children and leads to reduced lung function and missed school days.

Particulate Matter (PM) is the "soot" produced by burning coal. Tiny particles of this material can penetrate into the lungs. Exposure to greater levels of PM is associated with increased deaths from lung and cardiac disease as well as higher infant mortality. It can also trigger asthma attacks in susceptible individuals.

Note: The medical societies of Nueces, San Patricio, Refugio and Aransas Counties have denounced the building of this plant based on its proposed emissions.

Ozone Levels in our community are being monitored because we occasionally reach the federal limit for it. This is the reason for our near-nonattainment status and Las Brisas would cause a 24% increase in industrial emissions of ozone-forming chemicals.

- Ozone, also known as smog, is formed when nitrogen oxides react with volatile organic compounds from industrial plants, mobile sources and others in the presence of sunlight.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lowered the eight-hour smog-ozone standard from 80 to 75 parts per billion (ppb) on March 13, 2008. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee had both suggested the standard be 60 ppb.
- Ozone is a potent respiratory irritant. At low levels of exposure, it can cause coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath

and chest pain. At higher concentrations, it can lead to lung tissue damage, reduced lung capacity, asthma exacerbation, as well as increased risk of hospitalization for asthma, bronchitis and other chronic respiratory symptoms. It is associated with premature death.

Note: The American Academy of Pediatrics stated in 2008: "The science is clear: Ozone pollution harms children. Critical parts of a child's lungs don't develop until after birth and the lungs continue to develop well into adolescence."

Isn't Las Brisas bringing jobs to Corpus Christi?

They are promising to add 80 new full-time jobs to the area. We like that! We want to see good high paying jobs here. However, people and animals in this area will be exposed to dangerous pollution. What price do you place on your health? Add to that the risk of federal sanctions due to nonattainment and the cost to the community far outweighs the small number of jobs.

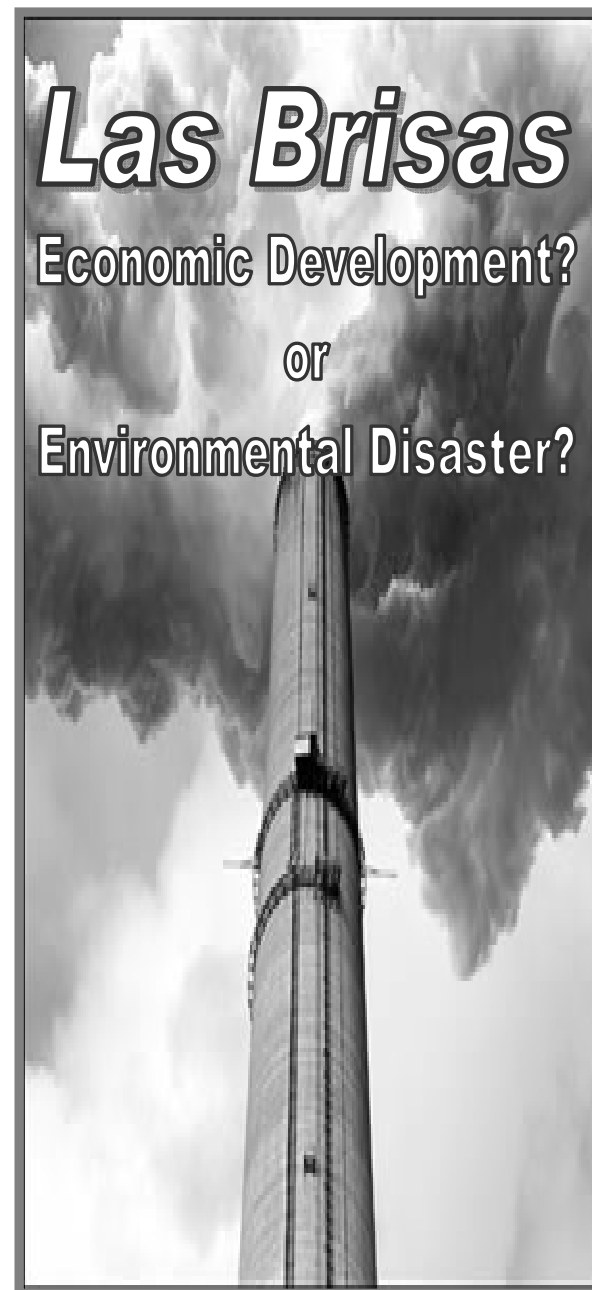
Note: Besides creating the same amount of energy, clean energy industries will actually create more jobs than a pet-coke burning facility.

How can I help keep clean air and water in the Corpus Christi area?

- ❑ ***Tell the Corpus Christi City Council*** members that you oppose the building of such a dirty plant in this area: (361) 826-3105 or email from www.cctexas.com, where you can also find meeting dates and location. Speak-out during the public comment period at their Tuesday meetings.
- ❑ ***Mark your calendar*** for the Contested Case Hearing to commence in Corpus Christi in the fall of 2009.

- ❑ ***Watch "Fighting Goliath,"*** a 25-minute Documentary, and learn more about this issue:
<http://www.fightinggoliathfilm.com>
<http://www.coalblock.org>
- ❑ ***Attend meetings*** posted on our website:
www.cleaneconomycoalition.org
- ❑ ***Receive notices*** of CEC meetings by emailing CleanEconomyCoalition-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- ❑ ***Contact the EPA*** and ask for their assistance (reference TCEQ permit #85013):
 - ***Lisa Jackson***, EPA Headquarters, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20460, (202) 272-0167
 - ***Larry Sarfield***, EPA Texas Region 6, Fountain Pl. 12th Fl, Ste. 1200, 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75202, (214) 665-2200
<http://www.epa.gov/region06>
 Toll free within Region 6: (800) 887-6063
- ❑ ***Contact the Texas State Board of Education, District 2***, Mrs. Mary Helen Berlanga, 2727 Morgan Avenue, Corpus Christi, TX 78405, (361) 881-1000. Let her know we are concerned about the health of our school children after reading the Toxic Schools report at:
<http://content.usatoday.com/news/nation/environment/smokestack/index>
- ❑ ***Call your legislators*** to let them know what you think about building a clean economy in the state of Texas (or look up their mailing addresses at <http://www.legis.state.tx.us>).

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| Rep. Abel Herrero | (361) 882-2277 |
| Rep. Solomon Ortiz, Jr. | (361) 991-0047 |
| Rep. Todd Hunter | (361) 694-3121 |
| Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa | (361) 972-1841 |
| Sen. Judith Zaffirini | (512) 463-0121 |
| US Rep. Ruben Hinojosa | (361) 358-8400 |
| US Rep. Solomon Ortiz, Sr. | (361) 883-5868 |



www.cleaneconomycoalition.org
www.coalblock.org