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The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) helps communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. We are a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and other advocates collaborating across borders to promote grassroots efforts to build a sustainable, just future.

EDITOR: MAGGIE KEENAN
NEWSLETTER LAYOUT: ARIES CREATIVE
PRINTED BY: CLANCEY PRINTING CO.

USING: **SOY BASED INKS**
UNBLEACHED 100%
POST-CONSUMER
RECYCLED PAPER

Victories Around the World



UKRAINE

Court orders industry to inform citizens about air pollution

In January, ELAW partners in Ukraine celebrated a high court ruling ordering a subsidiary of France’s Lafarge Cement to release information on plans to expand kiln capacity by switching fuels from natural gas to coal and used tires! This victory for clean air ends a three year dispute between Environment-People-Law (EPL) and JSC Mykolaivcement (Lafarge Group).

Emissions from cement kilns that burn coal and used tires pose a serious health risk to communities. EPL tried for three years to gain access to what should have been public documents outlining details of the scheme.

“ELAW provided enormously helpful scientific analysis,” says Olena Kravchenko, EPL Executive

Director. “Liza Aleksyeyeva, our staff attorney on this case, was an ELAW Fellow in 2006. Her time with ELAW helped her build confidence and take the next step to winning justice.” Olena is now an ELAW Fellow herself, working one-on-one with ELAW staff and studying English at the University of Oregon’s American English Institute.

EPL is working to ensure that Lafarge’s proposed expansion plans comply with Ukraine’s environmental regulations and do not pose hazards to residents. This high court ruling is the first of its kind and sets a good precedent in Ukraine for the public’s right to information about potentially polluting industrial activities.

Olena is the Executive Director at Environment-People-Law (EPL), Ukraine’s leading grassroots environmental law organization. Olena is in Eugene for ten weeks to collaborate with ELAW staff on EPL’s work protecting communities and the environment. Many thanks to the Trust for Mutual Understanding and the American English Institute for making Olena’s Fellowship possible.

“This is a final ruling, which acknowledges the violation of fundamental rights through air pollution and noise . . . I am thrilled!”

Gines Ruiz

SPAIN

Air and noise pollution must stop

Years of hard work have paid off! Residents of Murcia, in southeast Spain, have suffered for years – pungent emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from an asphalt roof manufacturing plant were making them sick. In January, Murcia’s High Court ruled that the ASSA plant must clean up its act!

ELAW partner Gines Ruiz, wrote: “This is a final ruling, which acknowledges the violation of fundamental rights through air pollution and noise . . . I’m thrilled!”

Gines is an attorney with AJA (Association for Environmental Justice), based in Murcia, in a fertile agricultural region on the Segura River known for oranges, lemons, and vineyards.

ELAW scientists worked with Gines to design air quality tests for benzene and other carcinogenic VOCs in the vicinity of the plant. Meche Lu, ELAW Environmental Research Scientist, prepared reports and an affidavit about the health impacts for local communities.

Congratulations to Gines and everyone at AJA for persevering and winning!



Award Winning Partners



Ritwick Dutta, India

Ritwick Dutta received a “Greenies” eco award from NDTV-Toyota in recognition of his environmental leadership and skill finding innovative solutions to environmental challenges. President Pratibha Devisingh Patil presented a cash prize and Greenies trophy and said: “These awards are recognition of the environmental consciousness shown by individuals, institutions, organizations and businesses. I want to congratulate all the award winners which include legendary figures who are working with deep commitment to follow green ethics.” ELAW has collaborated with Ritwick since 2003.



Calvin Sandborn, Canada

The Victoria City Council awarded Calvin Sandborn “Honorary Citizen” in recognition of his contributions, with the University of Victoria Environmental Law Clinic, to Victoria and the Capital Region. The Mayor of Victoria presented the award on December 16, 2010, citing the Clinic’s role in protecting 2,350 hectares of ocean front, canyon and forests near Victoria; reforming regional storm water management; advocacy on numerous other environmental issues; and its mission of training Canada’s next generation of public interest lawyers. Calvin is ELC’s Legal Director. ELAW has collaborated with Calvin since 2007.



Wang Canfa, China

China Central Television awarded Wang Canfa “Hero of the Rule of Law,” recognizing his work over the last ten years. This work includes drafting China’s Clean Water Act and China’s Prevention and Control of Water Pollution Law. Canfa is Director of the Center for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims (CLAPV) and a law professor at China University of Political Science and Law. CLAPV provides free legal consultation and has helped more than 100 environmental pollution victims bring their cases to court. ELAW has collaborated with Canfa since 2007.