

# BENICIA HERALD

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- JANUARY 31, 2018 **Letters: ISO and cannabis**

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## *Real-time air monitoring needed*

According to a May 23 KQED article regarding the May 5 Valero Benicia Refinery incident: “The refinery should be held to higher safety standards, the same standards that the four refineries in Contra Costa are held to,” Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia said. The number of serious refinery accidents in Contra Costa have dropped since the industrial safety ordinance was adopted in 1999, according to Gioia.

“It gets refineries to change the way they look at risk, minimize and reduce risk,” Gioia said. “It’s an effective ordinance.”

Some might ask, why does Benicia need a community Industrial Safety Ordinance (ISO)?

There are many reasons for a Benicia ISO including, more local input into the regulations that affect Benicians, better reporting to the city and the community when an accident occurs, possible prevention of the same kind of accident through a thorough review process with potential interventions and the one I think is most important, the installation of real-time air monitoring in residential areas of Benicia. As Kathy Kerridge pointed out in a recent letter,

”Real-time monitoring is up and running in other parts of the Bay,

<http://airwatchbayarea.org> is online and has a mobile app that will let you see current and historic readings from community monitors in Richmond, Crockett and Rodeo. In Benicia, there is one private person who is monitoring the air with his monitor.

Unfortunately, the Benicia monitor only has readings for dust and particulate matter unlike other community monitors which provide data on a variety of air pollutants.” \* The real-time air monitors in Richmond, Crockett and Rodeo provide

data on a host of different toxic pollutants recorded in the air at varying times of day. Some of the chemicals monitored are Benzene, Hydrogen Sulfide, and Sulfur Dioxide, which can result in serious adverse health effects at certain levels. Another good example of this same type of monitoring that can occur with the Benicia ISO is the Richmond Community Air Monitoring Program online at <http://www.fenceline.org/richmond/index.htm>.

The Richmond Community Air Monitoring Program and /or the Air Watch Bay Area models would be an important safety tools here in Benicia, especially, for families with asthmatic children or adults. Statistics from the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regarding average asthma rates throughout the state of California, listed Solano County as having a 30 percent average asthma rate compared to the state of California which has a 14 percent

rate, so we would especially benefit from ongoing air monitoring. Knowing the air quality in real-time could help families make decisions as to whether they limit their time or their child's time outdoors in an especially poor air quality day and having a refinery as a neighbor, even one with a publicly stated good safety record, it would be important to know whether the air contains toxic substances. This would help the town of Benicia assuage the "worries" of people who have felt reluctant to move to a refinery town when they can definitively see the air quality in real time. Having a Benicia ISO would make air monitoring and the safety of the residents in Benicia a top priority, whereas to the state of California and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, we're just another community in their jurisdiction.

*Pat Toth-Smith,  
Benicia*

### ***Cannabis depends on new generation***

Demographers have characterized generational groupings as "Baby Boomers", "Generation X", "Millennials," and now "Generation Z", with each one more permissive than the previous grouping with regard to cannabis legalization. Benicia's demographics indicate the median age to be in the mid-40s. This election season is sure to see a candidate or two closer to the median age and fully supportive of regulated cannabis. A growing majority of citizens share this view. Our last election here in 2016 revealed that close to 900 voters did not participate in the selection of mayor ("undervotes"). A whopping 6,000 undervotes were racked up in the council race for two seats. In the county supervisor contest, there were over 5,000 undervotes. It is interesting to note that all candidates were either senior citizens or expressed ideology that did not appeal to younger voters. No conservative-labeled candidate was successful last election. In one contest, a candidate that openly indicated support for Proposition 64 and regulated activity easily won over an opponent that expressed no opinion on cannabis legalization.

This election season in our town will see 400 new Gen Z voters fresh out of high school, ready to get behind the candidates for two expiring council seats that best represent their interests. It is clear to me the thousands of undervotes last time will be out in force to help elect candidates supportive of our emerging cannabis economy, not to mention job opportunities for local employment of younger citizens like themselves. Now the city of American Canyon has joined the city of Vallejo in gathering community input via public meetings and an online survey about regulated cannabis. Benicia checked this step off many months ago and has taken the lead in Solano County.

Speaking of undervotes, I added the precinct totals three times to make sure the total undervote count in Benicia on Proposition 64 was correct. Four hundred and twenty voters were not sure which way to go in 2016, and are likely to join in support of regulated cannabis activity by the time November rolls around.

*Stan Golovich,  
Benicia*