



Contact: Riptide Communications: 212-260-5000

**GROUPS TO LAUNCH NATIONAL TOUR TO HIGHLIGHT DEVASTATING IMPACT
OF TOXIC CONTAMINATION ON THE POOR AND PEOPLE OF COLOR**

Nationwide Call for Environmental Justice

New York, NY June 26, 2006 – A coalition of over 70 environmental justice, social justice, public health, human rights, and worker’s rights groups today announced plans to launch the Environmental Justice for All Tour in September 2006 to highlight the devastating impact of toxic contamination on people of color and in poor communities across the United States. Three bus caravans packed with activists, health researchers, environmental scientists, and public policy experts will tour communities in the Northeast, South, and West Coast, where people are suffering serious health effects associated with toxic pollution. Organizers say the Tour will provide advocacy tools to affected communities and put pressure on Congressional leaders to make the elimination of environmental hazards a priority issue in the upcoming elections.

“During this tour we will expose how industry, government, and the military have turned the places where people live, play, work, and pray into toxic dumping grounds,” said Dorothy Felix, a life-long resident of Mossville, LA and member of *Mossville Environmental Action Now*. *“Our community and many others are organizing to bring an end to this injustice by focusing on solutions that value and protect our health and the health of future generations,”* she added.

Stops along the Tour will include towns such as Mossville, LA, Sundial, WV, and Anniston, AL, communities that have suffered widespread and significant health effects due to the persistent presence of industrial toxins in their air, water, and food.

In the African American community of Mossville, 14 industrial facilities including an oil refinery, vinyl production facilities, other petrochemical manufacturers, and a coal-fired power plant operate a few yards away from some Mossville residents, and form a cluster within one-half mile of the entire Mossville community. Local industries have contaminated the fish and polluted lakes, bayous, and groundwater

In the small West Virginia town of Sundial, Marsh Fork Elementary School is located just 200 feet from a coal silo and 400 yards downstream from a leaking sludge dam containing billions of gallons of toxic sludge. The health problems are severe. Five school employees and one 17-year old former student have all died from cancer, and 80% of parents surveyed reported that their children suffer from health problems such as asthma, nausea, headaches, and dizziness.

Anniston, AL is the first city in the nation where the government has distributed gas masks to residents living near a chemical weapons incinerator, in case of an accidental release of lethal nerve or mustard agent.

Many residents also have some of the highest-measured levels of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), toxic contaminants that have an adverse impact on the environment and have been known to cause health problems upon exposure.

The Tour will also stop in Gulf Coast communities, where the combined effects of global warming and toxic pollution are undermining the recovery of areas destroyed during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Each of these communities is engaged in solution-driven efforts that draw attention to a broken US environmental protection system that defends old polluting industries instead of requiring innovative and safer technologies, and establishing safeguards for protecting human health from industrial toxins and hazards.

The *Environmental Justice for All Tour* was inspired at a meeting of environmental justice and public health groups from across the country who joined together to draw attention to the work of local activists in West Louisville, KY, dubbed by industry as “Rubbertown.” The collaboration of these groups brought light to the one-half mile stretch adjacent to an African American neighborhood where 12 toxic industrial facilities have left the area polluted, and people sick and dying.

Attached please find a copy of the tour routes (subject to change). For more information about *The Environmental Justice for All Tour*, visit the website at: <http://www.EJ4all.org>. Please direct all media inquiries or requests for interviews to Riptide Communications, Inc.

Tour Routes:

Northeast

Buffalo, Syracuse, Endicott, Albany, NY; Hartford, New Haven, CT; Boston, MA;
New York City; Newark, Linden, Camden, NJ; Washington, DC

South

Port Arthur, TX; Mossville, New Orleans, LA; Gulfport, MS; Anniston, AL;
Dickson & Nashville, Knoxville, TN; Berea, Louisville, KY; Whitesville, WV; Washington, DC

West Coast/California

Seattle, WA; San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Fort Ord, Fresno, Central Valley, Los Angeles,
Calexico, CA