

For immediate release:

No Toxic Waste Dump or Border Wall on O'odham Lands.

Friday, June 5, 2009 at 12:00 p.m - Indigenous and environmental justice protest to take place at the municipal building in Sonoyta, Sonora, Mexico to demand the cancelation of a toxic dump near the O'odham sacred site of Quitovac in Sonora, Mexico. Protest will also demand a stop to the building of the border wall on O'odham lands.

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Sonoyta, Sonora, MX – Indigenous and environmental justice activists will take action on Friday, June 5, 2009 in the town of Sonoyta in support of the O'odham indigenous peoples of Arizona and Mexico who are fighting a toxic waste dump proposed near villages and a sacred ceremonial site in Quitovac, Sonora, Mexico.

The Sonoyta protest will take place Friday, June 5th at 12:00 p.m. in front of the City Council Offices at the Sonoyta Municipal Building. The O'odham Rights Cultural and Environmental Justice Coalition and Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice are sponsoring this action.

At 12:00 p.m. the demonstrators will meet at the Sonoyta City Council offices to demand that Mexico protect traditional O'odham lands and sacred site near Quitovac, where a company called CEGIR wants to build a large hazardous waste landfill. Representatives from the O'odham communities that suffer from pollution and environmental racism will speak in support of the O'odham peoples' fight.

This action is organized in response to renewed attempts by CEGIR to win approval of the proposed dump by the municipality of Sonoyta, which has rejected the project twice. The grassroots O'odham and the Tohono O'odham Nation in Arizona and in the US and Mexico have fought this proposed dump for years. Friday's protest will mark an escalation of protests which will continue until the dump project is defeated once and for all. Recently three cities (San Francisco, Tucson and Phoenix) held protests in support of the O'odham. At a recent March 28 gathering in Quitovac, participants blocked the highway near Quitovac during a ceremony in which traditional O'odham songs were sung.

The culture and lives of O'odham people are also being harmed by the border wall that divides communities and families who have lived in these lands for thousands of years before the United States and Mexico even existed. "The O'odham lands continue to be a part of O'odham lives. Our songs and stories in our oral teachings go beyond these borders. The O'odham will continue to uphold their mandate to protect and maintain the songs and stories to our Mother Earth," says Ofelia Rivas, Tohono O'odham tribal member and spokesperson for the O'odham Rights Coalition.

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