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**For Immediate Release**

**Army and EPA Dodge Cleanup Responsibility**

**The Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network to Hold Press Conference,**

**Date: Sunday – January 28, 2007 Time: 10:00am Place: 217 Reindollar – EJ office**

Marina CA– Citizen’s groups today criticized the EPA’s decision to allow transfer of **cleanup** responsibility of certain properties at the Former Fort Ord from the Army to the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA).

Executive Director of the Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network (FOEJN), LeVonne Stone, stated her opposition to the EPA’s actions, arguing that “[t]his action is just another step towards locking the citizens out of the cleanup process, as well as re-use process. How can we hold the responsible parties accountable if the EPA and Army’s responsibilities are passed on to a third party?”

Not only was this decision made without notifying the citizens in advance, it was released in the Federal Register on the last Friday of the year, with only thirty days notice, and no advance notice to community oversight groups.

Mrs. Stone expressed her disappointment with the EPA; “[w]e are appalled that EPA went behind our backs with this decision; undermining citizens groups such as FOEJN, an organization funded in part, by the EPA itself.”

The net result of this decision will be a lack of direct review by either the EPA or the Army as well as an overall lack of responsibility for the cleanup of certain contaminated properties at this extremely large & complex Superfund site.

Furthermore, according to the agreement the EPA and Department of Toxic Substances Control cannot sue or take administrative action against FORA so long as FORA acts within the conditions of the agreement.

Most startling to FOEJN is FORA’s lack of experience in clean-up activities and questionable competence of undertaking such an overwhelmingly complex task.

Mrs. Stone:

“I don’t see how EPA can turn this over to the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), when FORA has no experience or expertise in this area, and does not have the legal authority to do cleanups.”

Mrs. Stone encouraged local residents to write the Army and EPA to voice their opposition to the plan.

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