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Sierra Club Responds to Industrial Fire in Richmond, Indiana

Richmond, Ind. – On Tuesday, officials advised residents to evacuate their homes due to a significant industrial fire in Richmond, Indiana. The fire took place at a previous factory location in Richmond that was recently being used to store plastics and other materials for recycling or resale. Plastics, which release toxic chemicals when burned, were among the items involved in the fire, creating potentially harmful smoke and releasing dangerous air pollutants.

Residents within half a mile of the fire have been ordered to evacuate, and those outside of a half-mile radius are encouraged to shelter in place, turn off HVAC units, bring pets inside, and keep windows and doors closed until further notice.

“Once again, communities are being forced to leave their homes because of another inexcusable and unnecessary disaster,” said **Sierra Club Executive Director Ben Jealous**. “This is unacceptable. The failures at every level to enact even adequate oversight and safeguards continues to imperil our communities. Enough is enough. It’s past time the state and federal regulators that allowed this and so many other crises to happen in the first place finally act.”

“In addition to my deep concern about the health and safety of communities located near this recycling center, I’m also frustrated and concerned about the lack of responsibility from our state’s elected officials, property owners and businesses regarding the ongoing fire and toxic smoke in Richmond,” said **Amanda Shepherd, Director of the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter**. “As this fire burns, the Indiana legislature is putting further restrictions on human rights, while at the same time working to deregulate industries that cause harm to Hoosiers. Currently, [Senate Bill 472](#) is sitting on the governor’s desk and would promote the burning of plastics waste, which would mean more pollution for our state. Plastic is a risk to the safety of our community and the environment, and we must curb plastic production and hold industries accountable for the waste they produce. We are encouraging residents to call Gov. Holcomb and urge him to veto SB 472 to help prevent further tragedies.”

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About Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter: The Sierra Club is the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organizations in the United States with more than three million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. The Hoosier Chapter was formed in 1975 and has more than 10,000 members. Our mission is to explore, enjoy & protect wild places. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org/indiana.