



## Environmental Health

Environmental health disputes can be some of the most volatile. The issues are complex and technically dense, cleanup strategies and risk assessments are difficult to explain to the public, and parties have very different feelings about the dangers associated with environmental contamination. Moreover, discussions can be intensely emotional, as community members voice fears about possible health impacts to their families and others in their neighborhood. The challenge for government leaders is to figure out how to foster dialogues that honestly grapple with the underlying risks and concerns yet do so in a manner that leads to timely, stable and implementable agreements.

CONCUR has more than 20 years experience working with diverse stakeholders to design and put in place dialogues that help forge thoughtful, consensus-supported approaches to resolving sensitive environmental health disputes. The focus of CONCUR's project work has ranged from helping communities wrestle with the health risks associated with redeveloping contaminated parcels of land, to addressing air quality concerns at one of the nation's busiest shipping ports. In guiding these and other dialogues, CONCUR recognizes that the key to resolving contentious disputes is to create a forum for parties to share their underlying concerns and interests and find ways to present complex information in a format that enables all parties to fully digest the issues in play. In many instances, CONCUR puts a premium on what it refers to as joint fact-finding - a process by which parties pool their best available information rather than battle each other with competing science. CONCUR also emphasizes a stepwise process that enables parties to build incremental agreements. Finally, CONCUR undertakes a rigorous process to identify parties who can credibly represent the various perspectives in an ongoing structured dialogue.

### Selected Projects

Port of Oakland Air Quality Improvement Plan: CONCUR designed and facilitated a Stakeholder Involvement Process to support the Port of Oakland's development of a Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan (MAQIP). The planning effort brings together a wide range of interested parties, including community representatives, to identify and address cancer-related concerns tied to port operations' impact on air quality. The West Oakland community is particularly concerned with the potential exposure to ozone and particulate matter. The MAQIP sets an aggressive goal of achieving 85% reduction in community cancer health risks from 2005 levels by 2020. As part of its work on the project, CONCUR guided regular meetings of a diverse standing task force, along with facilitating a task force meeting where the complete draft was thoroughly discussed and reviewed. In doing so, CONCUR worked closely with the Port's technical consultants to provide accessible technical information to a wide range of stakeholders and to provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in discussion with the Port's technical consultants.

Clean Estuary Partnership to Develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Other Water Quality Attainment Strategies for the San Francisco Bay-Delta: CONCUR worked with a team headed by Applied Marine Sciences to coordinate and facilitate the work program for the Clean Estuary Partnership (CEP), a collaborative effort of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies, and the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association. The objective of the Partnership is to guide the development of TMDLs and other water quality attainment strategies for the San Francisco Bay Delta and its tributaries. CONCUR was responsible for program strategic planning, facilitation planning sessions, and managing the public outreach component. Key TMDLs addressed included PCBs, mercury, chlorinated pesticides, copper, nickel, PDBEs, PAHs, and selenium. These pollutants posed the risk of bottom dwellers, like shrimp, clams and fish, accumulating pollutants from the environment and redistributing them. A Risk Reduction Work Group was formed to focus on reducing human health exposure to toxic pollutants and on mitigating risks to human health.

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The Louisiana Statewide Comparative Risk Project: The Louisiana Comparative Risk Project was a major accord to improve management of the state's environment through a process that ranked 33 specific environmental issues based on their estimated risk to human health, ecology, and quality of life. A major impetus for this project was the recognition of widespread occurrence of childhood and adult cancer in many regions of the state. CONCUR's role in the project included a mix of process design for a Technical Committee and a Public Advisory and Steering Committee (PASC), translation of technical information, and facilitation of the very first multi-stakeholder dialogue in the state. The ranking process incorporated the perspectives of both the standing stakeholder body and the general public through a day-long "Summit on the Environment" and 11 town meetings. The effort resulted in a consensus view of the relative risks of the 33 specific issues, as well as the development of broadly supported environmental policy goals and action strategies. In all, representatives of 12 state agencies and over 30 interest groups, including the chemical and oil industries, environmentalists, fish and wildlife interests, labor and community activists, as well as federal agencies, signed the final agreement. Then-governor Roemer issued an implementing Executive Order to continue this type of comparative risk assessment in Louisiana.

Cleaning Up PCBs in the Hudson River and Raritan Estuary, New York: CONCUR mediated a complex dialogue under the auspices of the New York Academy of Sciences on the question of managing PCBs in the ocean region known as the New York Bight. CONCUR facilitated the negotiation of a single text agreement including 209 specific findings on sources, fates and effects of PCBs, resulting in 26 policy recommendations. One very specific recommendation was to encourage the state agencies of New York and New Jersey to adopt unified protocols for sampling, analysis, and interpretation of PCBs in bluefish, striped bass, and other migratory species to help avoid human health effects associated with ingesting bluefish that may contain high levels of PCBs. This dialogue included ten facilitated meetings over 18 months, with contributions by 20 scientific advisors and participation by 22 federal, state and local government agencies, environmental groups, port authorities and industry.

For a complete list of projects please visit our website at [www.concurinc.com](http://www.concurinc.com)

## About CONCUR, Inc.

CONCUR, Inc. provides services in agreement-focused mediation and facilitation, joint fact-finding, conflict assessment, environmental policy analysis, strategic planning, and environmental mediation training. Our staff has a unique dual expertise in both the process and substance of environmental decision-making. We are rigorously trained in the art and science of negotiation and dispute resolution, as well as in environmental planning and policy analysis. This dual expertise is the foundation of CONCUR's philosophy: to integrate different disciplines that strengthen our problem-solving capability so that we can provide clients the highest quality professional services.

For further information about our services please visit our web site at [www.concurinc.com](http://www.concurinc.com) or contact us at:

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