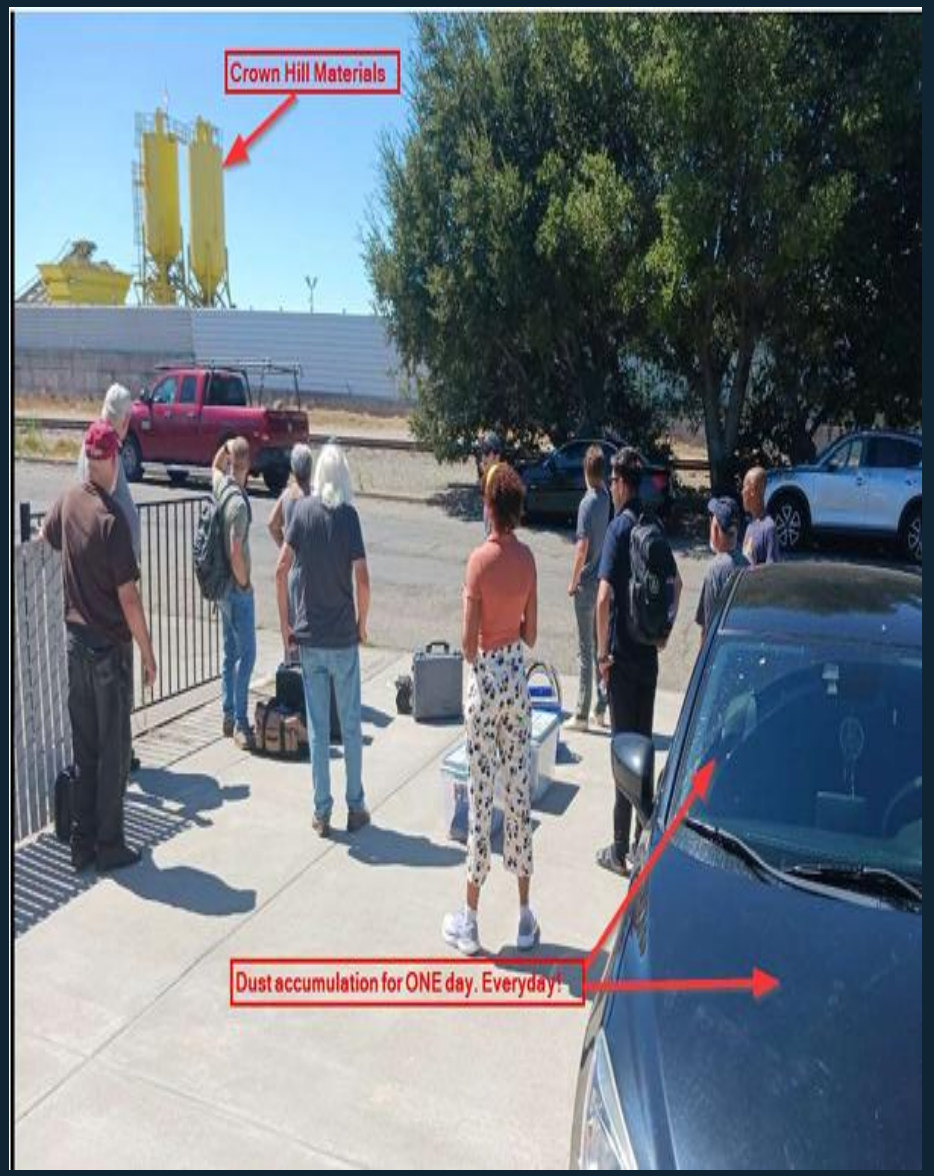
AQ SUMMIT • ASK AN EXPERT

From Community Complaints to Regulatory Action

Lessons from a Five-Year Fight Against Cement Dust Pollution

Ken Szutu

Citizen Air Monitoring Network (CAMN)
Bay Area Air District Community Advisory Council



“We can finally open our windows.”

One phone call reminded us why community work matters.

What made this possible?



Five years of dust





What residents saw and lived with

Click speaker icon: Ed’s testimony

It started with a phone call

Paul Winders — Clean Air Ambassador graduate

His community project continued after graduation. Then he called CAMN for help.



A meeting is not a solution

A focused group creates continuity.

Community concern → CAC ad hoc → Follow-through

Complex problems require people working together over time.

Cooperation was just the beginning



Two community meetings with Air District leadership and staff.

But obtaining essential equipment information still required a public records request.

The obvious solution wasn’t the one that worked



Visible dust — but the existing fugitive dust rule did not provide an effective enforcement path.

The decisive pathway was permitting.

PLAY DUST VIDEO

The breakthrough was in the paperwork

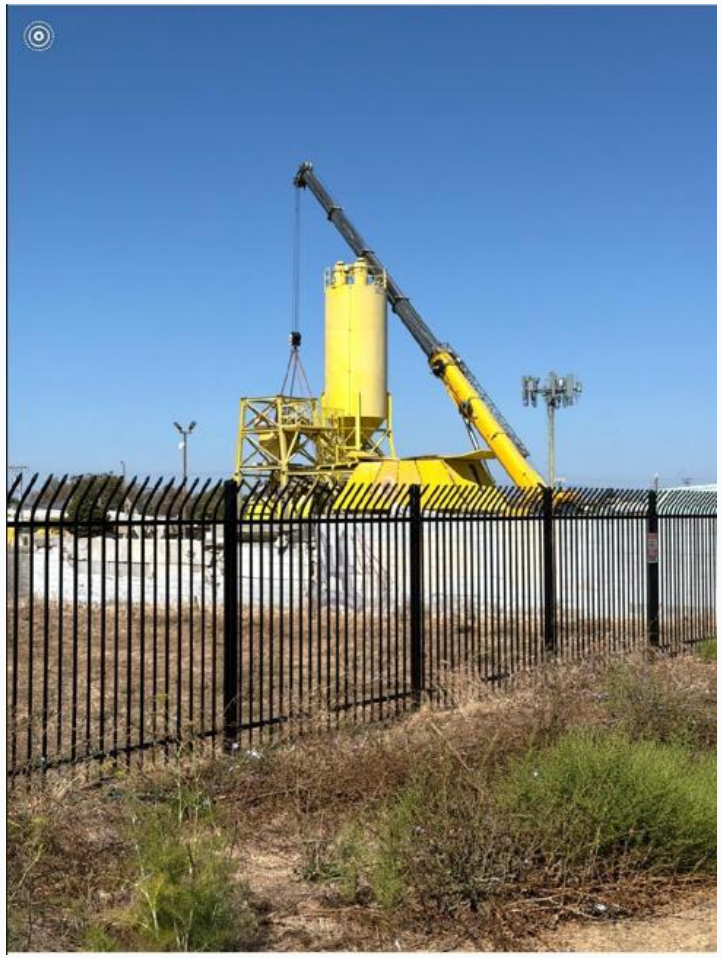
12 yd³/hr claimed in exemption paperwork

120–200 yd³/hr actual rated capacity



July 24: records request • August 11: records received • August 18: cease order

The tower comes down



The goal was not to close a business.

The goal was to stop pollution affecting nearby residents.

Lessons We Learned

1. **Define the problem and ask testable questions**
2. Create a mechanism for sustained follow-through
3. Work collaboratively — and seek useful information
4. Explore more than one regulatory pathway
5. Turn one case into broader improvements

“We can finally open our windows.”

Your Questions. Your Community.

What persistent air-quality problem are you trying to solve?

The reason we do this work

“We can finally open our windows.”