

## Stand up to polluters

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Perchlorate is an issue that affects everybody in San Bernardino County because of potentially huge costs to local governments' budgets. It is tragic that the Department of Defense and its contractors have denied their responsibility. Frankly, the Bush administration has been derelict on the perchlorate issue.

When I represented Rialto in the state Senate, I personally went to EPA Regional Administrator Wayne Nastri to ask for help. Rialto did not want the plume declared a Superfund site because city officials thought it would stigmatize the area. Yet San Gabriel Valley is a Superfund site and is economically prosperous.

To see effective cleanup, we only need to look to the San Gabriel Valley Water Quality Authority. When I introduced a bill to create an Inland Empire Water Quality Authority five years ago, it was opposed by several local water purveyors. Now is the time for all the agencies affected by perchlorate to find a new spirit of cooperation.

The cleanup effort was thrown into disarray with the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board's near fatal error in 2002, when they repealed Cleanup and Abatement Orders. Since then I was able to strengthen the law so that the regional board must go after the polluters to get replacement water (SB 1004, 2003).

Now the Santa Ana regional board can right the course and see that the new Cleanup and Abatement orders are enforced. There are hearings starting Aug. 21 in Rialto. I am depending on the state to be strong and stand up to a drove of industry attorneys.

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