

## **Text I**

### **Oil and the Port**

The Harbor reaches into the land. It is a space connecting the edge of the ocean to and from the industries that spurred its development, particularly the oil industry.

The landscape of the South Bay moving from Carson to Wilmington and San Pedro reflects the eerie silhouettes of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century petroleum economies whose leaking tank farms and toxic plumes still haunt us. Historic booms of oil production in Long Beach and Wilmington shaped the nature of the Port of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Refineries followed, multiplying rapidly with the proliferation of the cars, planes and the entire petroleum industry. They ring the Port of LA and Long Beach with pipeline networks running alongside and under the roads.

According to Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Wilmington's refineries and the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach taken as a whole are the biggest polluters in the United States. Yet we live and work in their midst.

Tesoro is the latest owner of the refinery boasting the huge flag flanking Sepulveda Blvd and 223<sup>rd</sup>. Having worked there for three years, I can still smell the bitter odor of miscellaneous chemicals whose maintenance produces massive profits and a union wage for some of its employees. The danger of working with extremely flammable liquids means that the first thing you learn when you get hired is how to drag the fire hoses across the oil-stained roads to quench the inevitable fire. That's only day one.

We face a paradoxical question of how to create a healthier environment with good clean jobs.