



## National Center for Healthy Housing

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### **BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON RAIL INTERMODAL FACILITY HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**Columbia, MD** (March 6, 2012) – The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) will work with partners across Maryland, including various state and local health, transportation, and planning agencies, to conduct a health impact assessment (HIA) of the proposed Baltimore-Washington Rail Intermodal Facility as part of its efforts to incorporate health considerations into land-use planning decisions in Maryland. This project is supported by a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts with funding from The Kresge Foundation.

NCHH will determine and compare the impacts of the proposed Baltimore-Washington Rail Intermodal Facility at several potential sites in the Baltimore-Washington region. The purpose of the facility is to transfer trailers and containers between trucks and double-stacked trains in an effort to increase the amount of long-distance freight cargo moved on rail.

The facility poses potential health concerns to neighboring communities that include air and noise pollution, as well as substantial increases in local truck traffic leading to safety risks. Its construction and operation may also benefit health by creating local jobs and generating community tax revenue that supports services essential to health. The potential impacts of building the facility at each of the alternate sites will also be assessed under the environmental impact assessment process mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCHH will conduct the HIA in parallel with the NEPA process.

"Decisions about how goods are moved across the state and across the country are made every day," said Rebecca Morley, Executive Director of NCHH. "Only in a few instances are those decisions looked at through the lens of public health. This project will enable NCHH to use its research expertise to help residents of Maryland understand the anticipated impact of the intermodal transfer facility on their health and provide input into the decision-making process."

The goal of this HIA is to use the findings and recommendations to improve both the consideration of health and the implementation of specific mitigation measures to protect health in the final project decisions.

NCHH will host three community forums on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> to gather input from residents on how the proposed facility may affect health. The community forums will also provide an opportunity for residents to learn more about health impact assessment. For detailed information about the community forums, residents should visit <http://www.nchh.org/Policy/BaltimoreWashingtonRailIntermodalFacilityHIA.aspx> or call 410-992-0712.

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*The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) is the only national scientific and technical non-profit organization dedicated to creating healthy and safe homes for America's children through practical and proven steps. NCHH develops scientifically valid and practical strategies to make homes safe from hazards, to alert low-income families about housing-related health risks, and to help them protect their children.*