

For Immediate Release:

January 3, 2007

Contacts:

Suzie Canales, Citizens for Environmental Justice (CFEJ) 361-334-6764

Denny Larson, Refinery Reform Campaign, (RRC) 415-845-4705

## **MTV and Rolling Stone Magazine Kick Off The New Year With Their New Reality Show:**

### **Local Connection: Crew in Corpus Christi Last Summer, met with Citizens for Environmental Justice on local issues**

(Corpus Christi, TX) Last summer, over 2,000 young journalists applied for a summer associate position with Rolling Stone Magazine. Only six applicants were accepted. Over the summer, these 6 finalists competed with each other over assignments, covering national affairs, arts and entertainment profiles and politics. MTV cameras documented the young journalists' entire experience. The six finalists were competing to become the new contributing editor for Rolling Stone Magazine.

In July 2006, a crew from MTV accompanied Peter Maiden, one of the six finalists, to film Peter's assignment in Corpus Christi, Texas: Koch Industries - the largest privately owned company in the world. The crew spent two days with Citizens for Environmental Justice, filming meetings with several community members and discussing topics of concern.

### **Koch Industries Rise To The Top:**

Fred Koch, creator of Koch Industries, was a charter member of the John Birch Society which pushed for the repeal of civil rights legislation.

Bill Koch (one of Fred Koch's sons) told 60 Minutes II that his father's legacy was based on organized crime. He said that his brother Charles made a fortune stealing oil from beneath Indian reservations and federal land taking more oil than it paid for by cheating on measurements. In December, 1999, a jury found that Koch Industries did steal oil from the public and lied about its purchases – 24 thousand times. Koch eventually settled the suit for \$25 million.

In August 1996, Danielle Smalley was at her Texas home with her friend, Jason Stone, both were 17 years old. The Smalley home was located 200 yards from Koch's high pressure pipeline carrying butane. Danielle was packing to leave for school the next day. She was the first in her family to go to college. Jason and Danielle smelled gas and got in a truck to get help. But their truck set off an explosion, killing both. Their bodies burned beyond recognition. Danny Smalley, Danielle's father, filed suit against Koch Industries. The investigation exposed a pattern of negligence and cover-up involving the pipeline

described as looking like “Swiss cheese.” In 1999, a jury found Koch Industries guilty of criminal negligence and malice. Koch pipelines make up the largest oil and gas network in the nation.

In 2000, Koch Industries was fined \$30 million dollars, the largest civil penalty in U.S. history, for spilling over 3 million gallons of crude oil over 6 states.

Koch Industries and its enterprises gave millions from 1998-2004 in political contributions, mostly Republicans. Koch family foundations provide funding to several think tanks, which advocate for the rights of the upper class and fights for the freedom of corporate America. This seems to be money well spent. In 2000, Koch Industries was facing a 97-count indictment, possible prison time for company executives, and potential fines of \$352 million for releasing huge amounts of cancer-causing benzene from their Corpus Christi refinery and trying to cover it up. Just then, George Bush was elected president with the aid of Koch donations. The result: all but one charge were dropped. Koch pled guilty to falsifying documents and paid a mere \$20 million and no jail time for executives. Soon after, Koch Refineries in Corpus Christi changed their name to Flint Hills Resources (Koch is still the parent company).

“Despite this horrific record, or maybe because of it, Koch Industries is the largest privately owned company in the world,” said Suzie Canales, with CFEJ. “But a lot of people around the country have never even heard of them, much less know about their criminal history which includes dumping on low-income people of color in Corpus Christi. Multi-billionaires David and Charles Koch, on Forbes 400 list of America’s wealthiest, I believe actually belong in prison. White collar crime is just as deadly as any other. We hope this national show sheds light on the activities of Koch here in town.”

The Reality Show, “I’m From Rolling Stone,” premieres Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 p.m. central on MTV. The Corpus Christi segment will air on the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the 10-week reality show series, Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 9:00 p.m. central.

###