

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

February 27, 2024

Report on Health Study, Mitigation Efforts and State and Federal Response to Chiquita Canyon Landfill Incident

The Chiquita Canyon Landfill (Landfill) is a sizable 639-acre landfill situated in the Santa Clarita Valley, and it is owned and operated by Chiquita Canyon, LLC. Due to an ongoing odor incident that is adversely impacting the local community, the County of Los Angeles (County), at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, has sought assistance from both state and federal agencies. These concerns primarily revolve around persistent odors emanating from the Landfill, which have been significantly affecting the quality of life for nearby residents.

This month, the results of an independent health risk study—conducted at the Board’s direction by the County’s Department of Public Health (DPH)—were shared with the community. While the study concluded that odor exposure does not increase chances of long-term disease, it is undeniable that the community continues to suffer.

Residents have expressed ongoing concerns and the negative impact on their quality of life, and how it has been impacted since this odor incident started nearly one year ago. Two weeks ago, I called on the Landfill to begin providing relocation assistance services to residents living in the proximity of the Landfill. I also called on the Landfill to provide larger air filtration devices, to contribute more funding to the Utility Relief Program currently in place to help residents pay for their electricity bills, and to support a forthcoming Home Hardening and Rehabilitation Program that will help homeowners make home improvements to prevent odors from penetrating their indoor living areas. Strong odors originating from the Landfill have been impacting surrounding communities for months. Residents continue to complain of health impacts, including headaches, nose bleeds, eye and throat irritation, and shortness of breath, among other issues. The residents surrounding the Landfill should not be expected to live with the odors that are impacting them every day without significant relief.

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Numerous State, Federal and County agencies have responded to this crisis, but it has become increasingly clear that there is no predictable end in sight. While we work to address the significant impacts to those living near the Landfill, the community deserves clarity and responsiveness from all government agencies engaged in this crisis. Late last year, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began convening state agencies responding to the Landfill incident. Most recently, last week, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) sent the County a Proposition 65 Notification resulting from their investigation and citations of hazardous waste run-off at the Landfill.

As the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) and local department responsible for protecting the public's health, DPH serves as the tip of the spear in the community in responding to residents' questions and concerns. While many state and federal agencies have jurisdiction and are taking action against the Landfill's violations, DPH serves a unique role in amplifying and responding to the community's public health concerns. The Department of Regional Planning and Department of Public Works have also been involved in enforcement action and interface with impacted residents.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Health, Department of Regional Planning and Department of Public Works to present, in person, at the February 27, 2024 Board of Supervisors meeting on the status of mitigation efforts to address the Chiquita Canyon Landfill odor incident, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved agencies including our state and federal partners who have responded to this incident.

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