

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14th, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We write to you to express alarm and concern at the ongoing situation at the Chiquita Canyon Landfill in Los Angeles County. Since October of 2023 and even earlier, many of our constituents have experienced significant negative impacts on their livelihoods as a result of air pollution and other issues associated with the landfill, primarily stemming from an “elevated temperature event” beneath a closed portion of the site. To date, residents have faced elevated levels of pollutants, the threat of leachate from the landfill seeping into the water table, and a prolonged stench that has made day-to-day life in the surrounding area unbearable.

Ongoing enforcement action since last year has been ineffective in mitigating the primary issues that are impacting our constituents. It has become clear that significant action is now necessary to bring relief to residents. Accordingly, we are asking you as representatives of the affected communities to exercise your authority under the Constitution of the State of California and the California Emergency Services Act to declare a state of emergency in Los Angeles County. Doing so will allow California to mobilize state resources and bring a swift resolution to this crisis and expedient relief to our constituents.

This action is necessary for several reasons:

1. Residents in the communities surrounding Chiquita Canyon landfill have faced increased air pollution without cessation for more than 5 months, including elevated levels of benzene, carbon tetrachloride, and sulfur compounds.
2. The South Coast Air Quality Management District and CalRecycle have required Chiquita Canyon to begin implementing mitigation measures that have proven ineffective at addressing the root cause of the elevated temperature event at the landfill and at lessening the effects of pollution and odor impacting residents.
3. Many residents have reported to be suffering from acute negative health effects as a result of increased air pollution and emissions from Chiquita Canyon, such as nose bleeds, headaches, eye irritation, shortness of breath, and nausea.
4. Officials with the County of Los Angeles, which operates the landfill’s conditional use permit, has stated that the unilateral action at the county level “will certainly be legally challenged and will go nowhere”.

Therefore, with these factors in mind, we ask that you strongly consider issuing an immediate declaration of emergency to bring the full resources of the state of California to the aid of residents in Val Verde and Castaic that are impacted by the Chiquita Canyon landfill.

Sincerely,



Mike Garcia
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Scott Wilk
California State Senator



Henry Stern
California State Senator



Pilar Schiavo
California State Assemblymember



Steve Bennett
California State Assemblymember