



March 6, 2024

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

**Re: Chiquita Canyon Landfill State of Emergency Declaration Request**

The undersigned are writing to request you declare a state of emergency in Los Angeles County for an ongoing health and safety crisis for the communities surrounding the Chiquita Canyon Landfill. Since 2023, underground chemical reactions in a closed portion of the Chiquita Canyon landfill have not only resulted in emissions of toxic gasses, but also toxic leachate and runoff that has entered the surrounding areas.

The communities of Val Verde and Castaic as well as nearby schools have endured prolonged exposure to noxious gasses causing reported headaches, nausea, asthma, nose bleeds, heart palpitations, and more. A community survey I conducted found that residents have missed work and school, had to evacuate their homes, nearly a quarter spending over \$1000 to address its impacts, and nearly all have had direct health impacts to themselves or a family member.

In early February, the Los Angeles County Public Health Department declared Chiquita Canyon a public nuisance, finding elevated levels of benzene and carbon tetrachloride. Not only have these findings been validated from testing by the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Los Angeles Regional Water Control Board, but the corrective actions and violations issued to the Landfill - some elevated to DTSC's Office of Criminal Investigations - have raised grave concerns to the undersigned that the situation is not under control. For example, DTSC found that toxic materials were transported without the appropriate permit and also being treated by an entity without a permit to treat toxic materials, with the leachate being released into the LA sewer system after treatment not approved for toxic materials. This practice has since ended, but the LA Water Board recently denied a Water Quality Certification finding that the reaction is creating volumes of leachate that are overwhelming the landfill's containment system. These corrective actions have required timelines, but it's unclear that the landfill will be able to fully address the significant issues, leaving residents with uncertain resolution to immediate health and safety harms.

In February, the U.S. EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order, reserved for when the U.S. EPA finds there "may be an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or the

environment.” While the U.S. EPA is leading a multi-agency critical action team to coordinate progress, the residents are in dire need of support due to the air pollution and toxic substances being released by the Chiquita Canyon Landfill. And though Chiquita Canyon has agreed to assist with relocation services, the situation is untenable for residents, and they need the full support of the state for emergency assistance for relocation and additional state action to mitigate its impact.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Pilar Schiavo  
Assemblymember, 40<sup>th</sup> District



Eduardo Garcia  
Assemblymember, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Environmental Safety and Toxic  
Materials Committee

CC: Christine Aurre, Legislative Affairs Secretary  
Angela Pontes, Deputy Legislative Secretary