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California State Senate

SENATOR
SCOTT WILK
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION



September 5, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am writing to invite you to tour the Chiquita Canyon Landfill in my district, the site of an ongoing crisis for the nearby communities of Val Verde and Castaic. Since May 2022, an underground chemical fire at the landfill has generated noxious odors, hazardous leachate, and elevated benzene levels, all posing serious public health risks. Tens of thousands of complaints have been filed by residents suffering from respiratory issues, eye irritation, nausea, and more.

I have contacted CalRecycle, the California State Water Resources Control Board, and the landfill operator regarding the issue. My office has attended countless community meetings where officials provide updates on mitigation efforts. At these meetings, residents still remain frustrated by the slow progress in controlling the odors. There is also a perceived dismissal of their fears regarding long-term health risks. I can personally attest to landfill's effects, having felt nauseous during a visit to the site.

Despite ongoing efforts by state, federal, and county officials, significant challenges remain. The residents of Val Verde and Castaic are living in distress, their lives upended by the overwhelming odors, fears for their safety, and financial strain. The leachate also threatens to contaminate the Santa Clara River, Southern California's last major free-flowing river, which empties into the Pacific Ocean.

While state agencies have explained that a State of Emergency is not necessary, I remain very concerned about this situation. Your presence would strongly underscore the state's commitment to resolving this crisis. A visit would provide a firsthand look at the severity of the situation, and allow for direct dialogue with affected residents and stakeholders. It may also inspire potential new solutions and increased support.

I urge you to prioritize this visit and help bring much-needed visibility to this ongoing public health and environmental issue. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Wilk". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the "Sincerely," text.

Honorable Scott Wilk
California State Senate
District 21

CC (via email):

Congressman Mike Garcia, U.S. House of Representatives (CA-27)

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (5th District)

Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, CA State Assembly (40th District)

John Perkey, Waste Connections, Vice President, Deputy General Counsel – Compliance and Government Affairs

John Musella, The Musella Group

Bob Lewis, Castaic Area Town Council and Chiquita Canyon Landfill Community Action Committee

Val Verde Civic Association

