

# Sunshine Canyon Landfill, A Message from our Future

3/1/2017 - Submitted by Members of Citizens for Chiquita Canyon Landfill Compliance - [c4cccl@gmail.com](mailto:c4cccl@gmail.com)

The Chiquita Canyon Landfill is in the final stages of seeking approval for an expansion, so you may have been hearing about it a lot lately or for the first time. As the upcoming public hearing is Wednesday March 1st, 6pm at Rancho Pico Junior High School [ 26250 Valencia Blvd. Stevenson Ranch 91381] the landfill has shifted into overdrive to get as many positive messages out there as they possibly can. However, there is one message which we should all pay very close attention to; how the nearby Sunshine Canyon Landfill went through a similar expansion that has impacted the nearby communities of Granada Hills and Sylmar.

Let's start with getting caught up on each project's specifics.

## A Brief Comparison of Sunshine Canyon Landfill and Chiquita Canyon Landfill

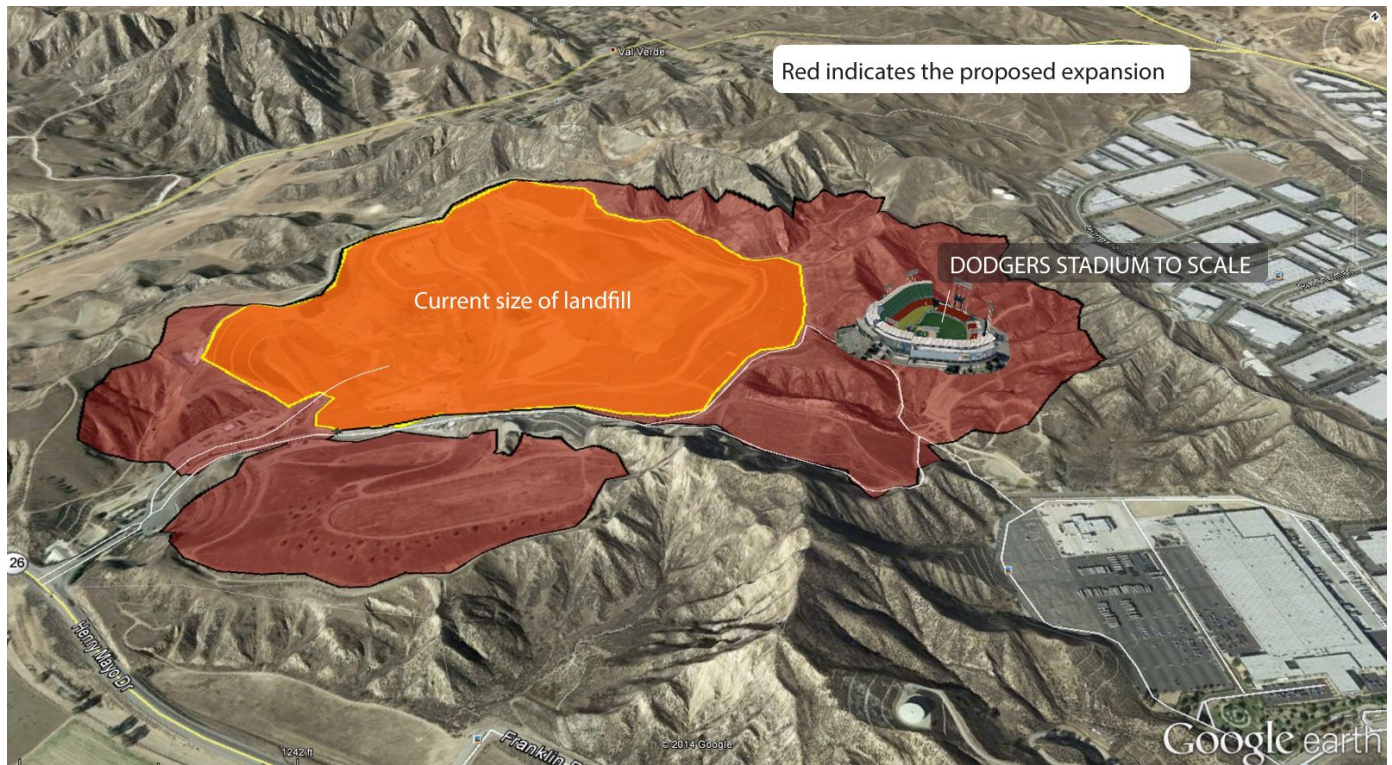
<b>SUNSHINE CANYON LANDFILL (current)</b>	<b>CHIQUITA CANYON LANDFILL (proposed)</b>
Class III landfill (i.e., a municipal landfill that is not authorized to accept hazardous waste) <sup>1</sup>	Class III landfill (i.e., a municipal landfill that is not authorized to accept hazardous waste) Plus a Household Hazardous and Composting Facility
363 acres	400 acres + 143 feet vertical increase to pile
8,300 tons per day	12,000 tons per day
Nearest Residence: .3 miles <sup>2</sup>	Nearest Residence: 900 feet
Nearest Commercial Business (minus onsite): 761 feet (north) .8 miles (south)	Nearest Commercial Business (minus onsite): 500 feet (east)
Nearest School: Van Gogh Elementary - 1 mile	Nearest School: Santa Clarita Valley International Charter School (SCVi) - .8 miles (Proposed Landmark Village Elem. - 500 feet)

At first glance, these two landfills have a few similarities although Sunshine is slightly smaller than an expanded Chiquita, taking in less tonnage and farther away from residences and schools. They also both sit at gateways to the Santa Clarita Valley, Sunshine at the south and Chiquita to the north. Sunshine is nestled south of the 5 freeway intersection with the 14 Hwy, Chiquita just west of the 5 freeway on the 126 Hwy. In fact, you may have already smelled either of these landfills from the 5 on your commute and did not know its source.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/compliance/sunshine-canyon-landfill>

<sup>2</sup> <http://bit.ly/SunshineCynLandfill>



A scale comparison of Dodger Stadium to the size of the expansion being proposed at Chiquita Canyon Landfill

## What we can learn from Sunshine Canyon Landfill

### HOW BAD 8,000 TONS A DAY SMELLS

Since its expansion, Sunshine has been reeling with public outcry regarding odors and traffic. Searching “sunshine canyon landfill odors” pulls up dozens of articles and case hearings written about how bad it is for residents there. Sunshine has received 119 odor violations since 2014 averaging about 30 a year.<sup>3</sup> To anyone who lives next to a landfill this is an incredible number because they know how hard it is to get a violation. You may think agents regularly track odors at landfills but in reality it is largely up to us the citizens to regulate odors and it is a very difficult process to get a violation.

Here is the process for reporting odors to the Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), the agency in charge of air quality:

1. They must receive 6 calls in one hour (it was 3 late last year but has returned to 6)
2. An agent comes out often from Diamond Bar, CA to verify the odor (or not at all due to low staffing)
3. The agent then goes to each complaint’s address to smell the air.
4. After the same odor is verified at all 6 locations they then go to the landfill to verify if the air smells the same.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www3.aqmd.gov/webappl/fim/prog/novnc.aspx?fac\\_id=49111](http://www3.aqmd.gov/webappl/fim/prog/novnc.aspx?fac_id=49111)



5. If it is indeed the same odor, a notice of violation is given.

This whole process takes hours which often means the odorous gasses may have already moved or dissipated before an agent even arrives. We can only imagine how many calls went unverified if this process was fulfilled 119 times. It also helps to illustrate how bad and how long the odors from Sunshine have to be. Residents in Val Verde, the community closest to Chiquita, already feel it is impossible to actually get a violation. Even this past Monday February 27th, calls were made after an agent had already come out and they refused to come back. It takes a lot of community effort and work to make sure the landfills are held accountable for their odors.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE NEXT TO A LANDFILL TO FEEL ITS EFFECTS**

Sunshine's odor calls come largely from Granada Hills and Sylmar. The center of both communities sit about 3 miles away from the closest landfill border (the garbage gets dumped in various areas within those borders).<sup>4</sup>



Sunshine Canyon Landfill Proximities to the nearby communities vs. Chiquita Canyon Landfill

If Sunshine's 8,300 tons is impacting residents and businesses 3 miles away we can average that out to about 1 mile reach per 2766 tons. If we apply that to **Chiquita's future impact at 12,000 tons per day, it could reach around 4.3 miles from its borders.**

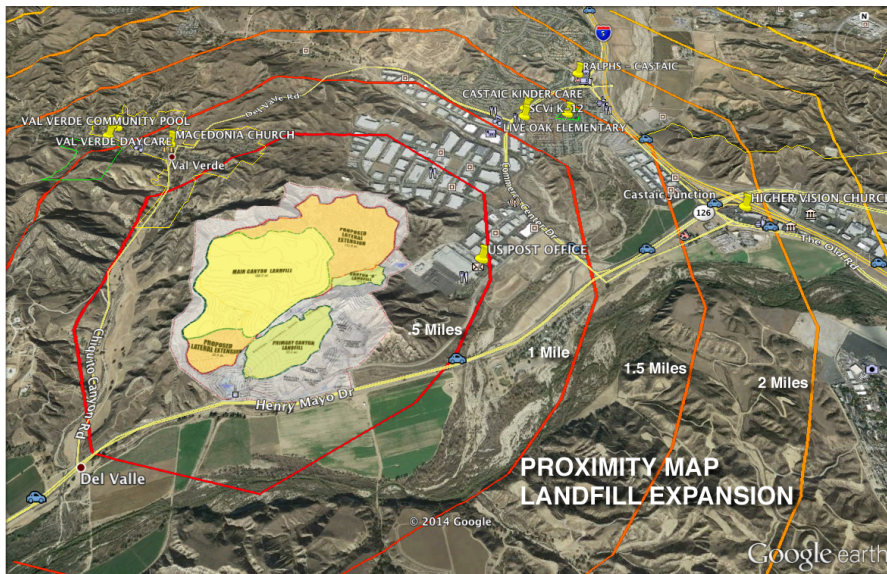
Here is what sits 4.3 miles from the Chiquita expansion border; just north of the **Lake Hughes Road exit and the 5 in Castaic, Rio Norte Junior High to the Northeast, the intersection of McBean Parkway and Magic Mountain, and the Poe Parkway and Stevenson Ranch Parkway intersection.** That is probably a lot farther into our cities than we all thought about.

<sup>4</sup> <http://bit.ly/SunshineCynLandfill>





Mile markers at 3 miles and 4.3 miles



General look at distances

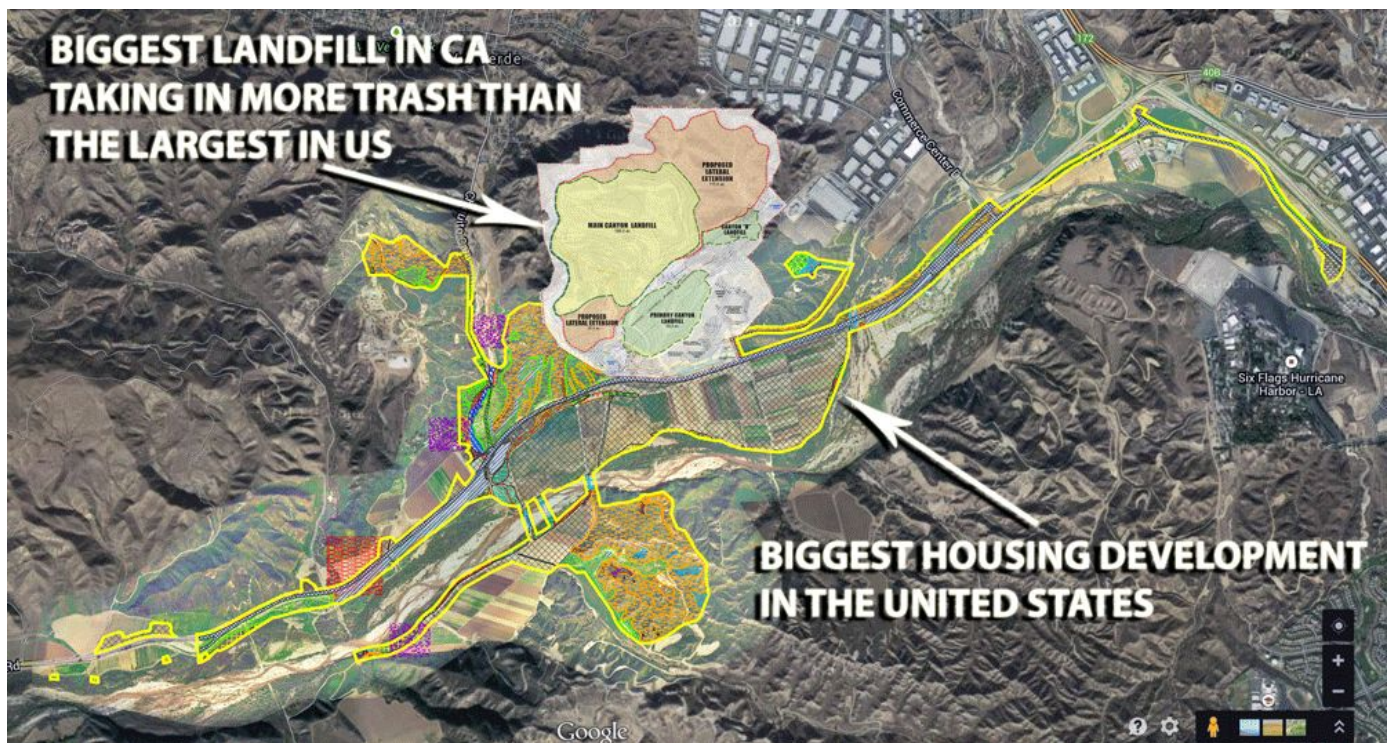
Naturally there are other factors to take into consideration such as the east side of the landfill where the natural ridge is the lowest (the garbage pile is hundreds of feet taller than it now) combined with wind direction which very often blows west to east ... right into Santa Clarita. In addition, **Chiquita also reports it will be increasing inbound truck trips to 975 per day** (this number reflects inbound material only, not including vehicles for



construction or facilitation) .<sup>5</sup> The pollution and traffic of this many trucks traveling up the 5 to the 126 will be significant, especially considering that trucks already travel from as far as Orange County, and Victorville to Chiquita.

### **SANTA CLARITA WILL HAVE A LOT OF ODOR-FILLED DEVELOPMENTS**

It is easy to see many houses and businesses will be in extremely close proximity. What we don't see are the proposed and current projects for development. The IAC Commerce Center, technically in Valencia but butts up to the northeast landfill border, is being developed right now<sup>6</sup>. It will span a whopping 25 million square feet of industrial and office market space all within 1 mile of the expansion<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, Newhall Land and Farming is working right now to gain approval for the first two phases of their mega development (Landmark Village and Mission Village). It will be the largest development in the United States and sit literally just across the 126 from the dump. The development in its entirety will include over 20,000 homes and a handful of schools.



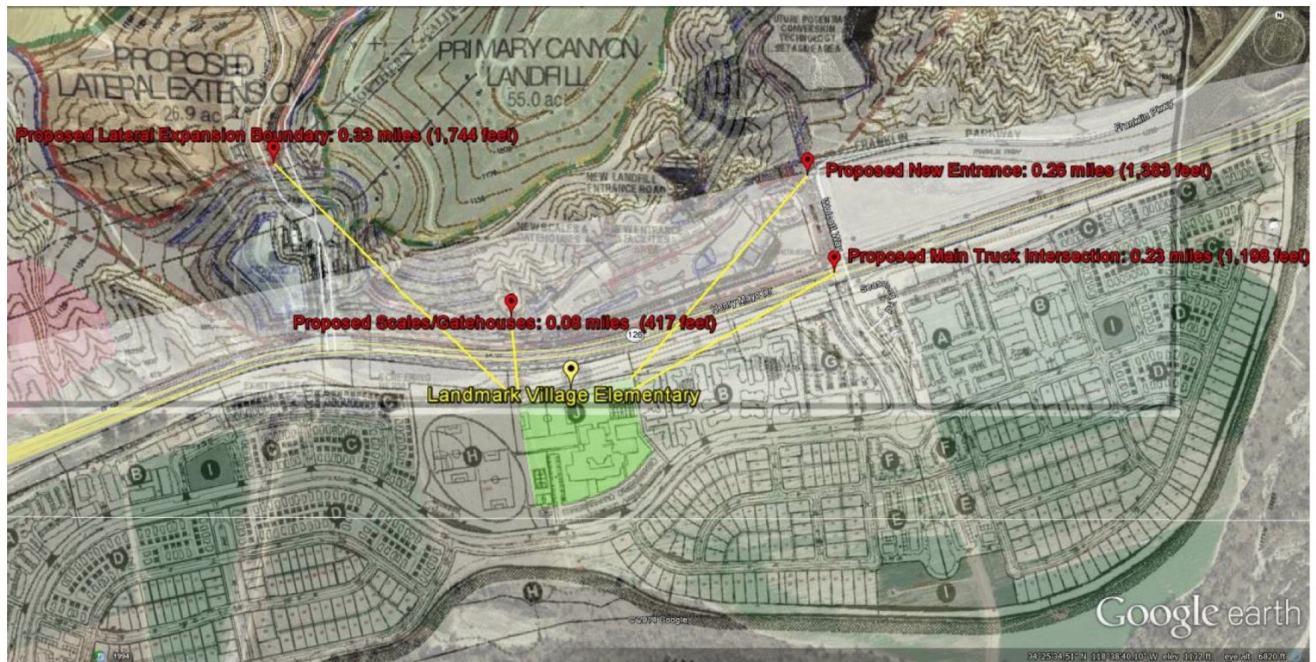
Chiquita Landfill Expansion comparison with Newhall Land Development both seeking approval right now

One proposed elementary school, Landmark Village Elementary, would be about 417 feet from the current entrance of the landfill on the other side of the 126.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 1 -1.6.2 Summary of Operational Baseline and Proposed Project -- Trucks, *Table 1-3. Operational Baseline with Proposed Project Truck Trips*

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.scvedc.org/clientuploads/SCV%20Business%20Parks/SCVEDC\\_Map\\_Insert\\_\\_CROP.jpg](http://www.scvedc.org/clientuploads/SCV%20Business%20Parks/SCVEDC_Map_Insert__CROP.jpg)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.iacommercecenter.com>



Landmark Village Elementary School location, with superimposed map images from the Landmark Village EIR.

## IT WILL AFFECT OUR SCHOOLS, WORKPLACES, AND HOMES

Van Gogh Elementary is 2 miles away from Sunshine Canyon Landfill and had to install charcoal filters in their school to mitigate landfill odors. However, odors still seep into classrooms and hang over the schoolyard.

*"The odors that we smell in the morning terrorize our morning routine," said Hindi-Chahayed, president of the parent-teacher organization at Van Gogh Charter School, considered the epicenter for landfill smell. "Kids hold their noses when coming to class. We cannot hold morning assembly."*

*"The smell is torture," she said.<sup>8</sup>*

**This from a school 2 miles away from Sunshine accepting 3,700 tons LESS than what Chiquita is asking for.**

How bad will it then be for schools like SCVi Charter School which sits **less than a mile** from the future landfill border? How about the kids at Live Oak Elementary or Castaic Middle School? If Van Gogh Charter has filters that can't keep odorous gasses at bay how will we fare when our landfill will be bigger and schools closer? If we survey the surrounding area of the expansion **there are 8 schools and preschools 3 miles or less from the future landfill**. In fact, **13,228 kids will be going to school or preschool within 5 miles or less of the landfill expansion border<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>8</sup><http://www.dailynews.com/environment-and-nature/20160827/the-smell-is-torture-san-fernando-valley-residents-say-of-sunshine-canyon-landfill>

<sup>9</sup> Student numbers gathered from 2016 at [www.schooldigger.com](http://www.schooldigger.com)



Here they are:

School	Number of Students	Miles from Chiquita Landfill
Santa Clarita Valley International - SCVi	933	0.8
Val Verde Head Start - Preschool	10-15	0.8
Live Oak Elementary	558	1.1
Castaic Middle School	933	2.02
Castaic Elementary	489	2.2
Fay's Child Care	14	2.3
West Ranch High School	2,340	2.7
Rancho Pico Jr. High	966	3
Oak Hills Elementary	613	3.05
Sloan Canyon Preschool	40	3.37
Tutor Time Castaic	80	3.37
Valencia High School	3,177	4
Tutor Time Stevenson Ranch	120	4.25
Rio Norte Jr. High	1,144	4.5
Sunshine Day Camp	100	4.5
Bridgeport Elementary	968	4.6
Charles Helmers Elementary	738	4.6

Google map of these schools here: <http://bit.ly/ccl5mileschools>

### **ODORS ARE MORE THAN JUST AN INCONVENIENCE, THEY ARE HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH**

We may not consider the health impact of smelling odorous gasses on a regular basis but landfill gasses are extremely dangerous.

"Landfills can produce objectionable odors and landfill gas can move through soil and collect in nearby buildings. Of the gases produced in landfills, ammonia, sulfides, methane, and carbon dioxide are of most concern. Ammonia and hydrogen sulfide are responsible for most of the odors at landfills. Methane is flammable and concentrations have sometimes exceeded explosive levels indoors. Methane and carbon dioxide can also collect in nearby buildings and displace oxygen." -- NY State Department of Health<sup>10</sup>

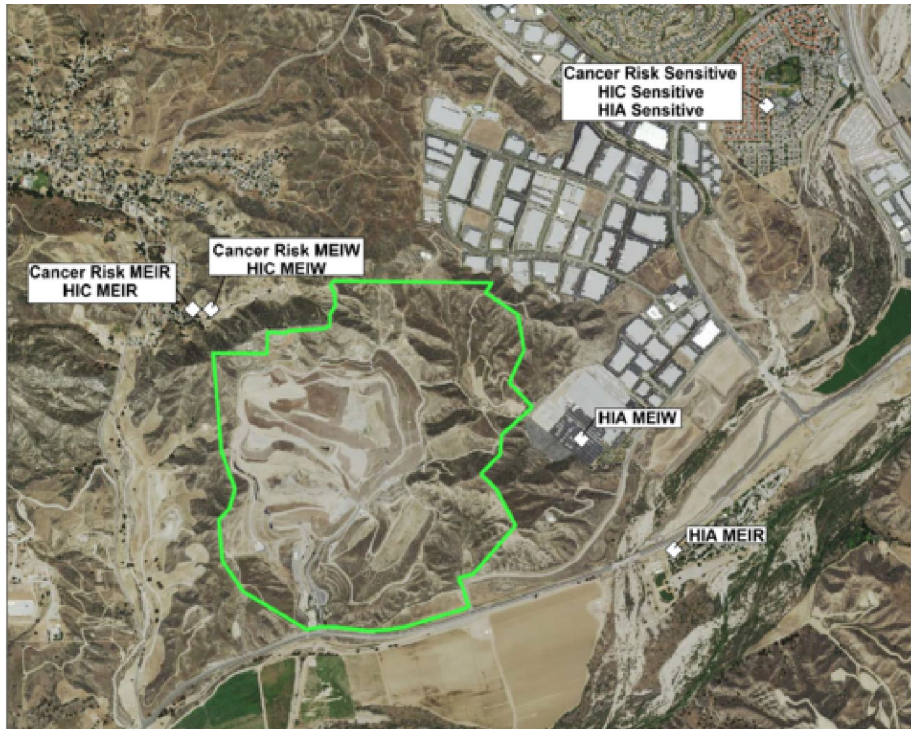
SCVi and Live Oak Elementary specifically are at ground zero as well as residents in Val Verde, the Valencia Commerce Center and along the 126 (future Newhall development). Each have been identified as cancer risk sites within the current Environmental Impact Report. This is not a scare tactic as the landfill has made it out to be, the agency hired to evaluate their project created this information in *Figure 11.5-Maximum Health Impact Locations from Proposed Project Construction and Operation*.<sup>11</sup> For a searchable map please visit:

<http://bit.ly/CCLCancerMap>

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/landfill\\_gas.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/air/landfill_gas.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8rxv9anzSiieVYVzEwR0FYbmc/view>



Live Oak Elementary, homes in Val Verde, the Travel Village, and the post office will be major epicenters for landfill offgas

## So how do we avoid another Sunshine Canyon Mess?

Some will probably say that this comparison could cast Chiquita in a favorable light. After all, some of what we are doing is trying to predict the future. For all the promises, research, planning, and PR charming that Chiquita has done throughout the valley and beyond, we can only reply that Sunshine made those promises too. And here we are, with a twisted gift of being able to see where we could end up.

### **WE HAVE TO FIGHT TO SHUT IT DOWN NOW BEFORE IT EXPANDS**

After all of the hardship that Granada Hills and Sylmar endure and the massive amounts of odor violations, Sunshine Landfill is only getting a slap on the wrist. Currently all they have received is an odor abatement to reduce their intake to 6,000 tons a day. Now let's take a step back here and consider any other business staying open after receiving 30 violations in the last 3 years...landfills seem to have tremendous leeway when it comes to public health. To try and mitigate the Chiquita Canyon Expansion will mean hours of residents efforts and calls to only have small measures in response. **It is an extreme burden on residents and businesses to regulate landfill odors after it has been approved so we must fight to not let this go through as it is proposed!**

### **SUPPORT THE VAL VERDE CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

The community of Val Verde already saw the writing on the wall in 1997 during the last Chiquita Canyon Expansion...yes this isn't its first expansion and the landfill has been affecting Val Verde for over 40 years now. The Val Verde Civic Association has a memorandum of agreement with the landfill that it would close once it reached 23 million tons or November 24, 2019 whichever occurs first. Chiquita surpassed 23 million tons this past June but the Department of Regional Planning gave them a backdoor option of a clean hands waiver to



continue to operate. What is going on by Sunshine means every single resident in Val Verde will be smelling the landfill on a regular basis and lose their abilities to enjoy their homes just like Granada Hills. **Use this agreement in your arguments and support their fight to protect the community from further pollution.** Like their facebook page at [facebook.com/vvcivic](https://facebook.com/vvcivic)

### ATTEND HEARINGS AND DEMAND YOUR COUNCILS OPPOSE THIS EXPANSION

Tonight is one of the last hearings on the landfill expansion. Landfill supporters have turned it into a partisan issue about supporting a business over the safety and well being of our communities. Please come out to support the opposition of this expansion:

#### Public Hearing on Chiquita Expansion attended by Regional Planning Commissioners\*\*

**Wednesday, March 1, at 6:00pm at Rancho Pico Junior High School, 26255 Valencia Blvd., Santa Clarita, CA 91381** (Limited parking. Rideshare, if possible. Additional parking may be available at the nearby West Ranch High School.)

**\*\*Wear red and a dust mask to show solidarity of opposition to the project**

Check into when your local council or HOA meets and have them write in letters of opposition and better yet... get involved! West Ranch Town Council for example, is an avid support of the expansion when 3 of the largest schools are the next closest after Castaic.

### DEMAND WE START USING THE MESQUITE REGIONAL LANDFILL FOR OUR WASTE NEEDS

Call on LA County to put an end to kicking this can down the road, and make a bold decision to keep our present and future communities from further risk. Do not grant this expansion, and put in place a plan to reduce waste and keep what needs to be in a landfill away from us and other communities. It's time to start using the Mesquite Regional Landfill which half a billion tax dollars were spent to create. The reason we don't use it now? There is too much landfill capacity in LA County. **There is no reason for this landfill to expand if a surplus of landfill capacity exists and our dollars are not being used to rail waste out to the desert away from homes and businesses!**

### WRITE LETTERS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING AND THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

If you aren't able to attend the hearing or even if you can... write your representatives and demand they oppose this landfill expansion! It is vital to use your voice in this fight!

Here is where to send your letters with reference to: Project #R2004-00559-(5)

#### 5 Los Angeles County Supervisors:

- Kathryn Barger (213) 974-5555
- Janice Hahn (213) 974-4444
- Sheila Kuehl (213) 974-3333,
- Mark Ridley-Thomas (213) 974-2222
- Hilda L. Solis (213) 974-4111

[executiveoffice@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:executiveoffice@bos.lacounty.gov)

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple Street

#### Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning:

(213) 974-6443

[zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov)

[rclaghorn@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:rclaghorn@planning.lacounty.gov)

[rglaser@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:rglaser@planning.lacounty.gov)

[ogomez@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:ogomez@planning.lacounty.gov)

320 West Temple Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor

Los Angeles, CA 90012

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**DON'T GIVE UP AND JOIN US!**

Citizens for Chiquita Canyon Landfill Compliance has stayed in the fight and done great work to push back on the landfill's tactics to undermine them. We consist of individuals from all over the Santa Clarita Valley, of ALL political affiliations and interests, so please like our facebook page and join in the efforts to defend our rights to healthy living and work environments. Like our facebook page at [www.facebook.com/c4cclc](http://www.facebook.com/c4cclc) or shoot us an email at [c4cclc@gmail.com](mailto:c4cclc@gmail.com)

**We are focused on doing what is right for the community... doubling the capacity of the Chiquita Canyon Landfill is absolutely not. Sunshine Canyon Landfill is all the proof we need.**