



Sheila de la Guerra Public Comment

From: Dorene White <dorenwhite0@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 8:24 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Fwd: SpaceX Mitigation Fund
Attachments: fullproposalSpaceXdw.pdf

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Dear Clerk of the Board,
I sent this to the supervisors individually this weekend.
Thank you, Dorene White

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dorene White <dorenwhite0@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 12, 2026 at 11:38 PM
Subject: SpaceX Mitigation Fund
To: <roylee@countyofsb.org>, <lcapps@countyofsb.org>, <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>, <Nelson@bos.countyofsb.org>, <lavagnino@countyofsb.org>

Proposal: Launch Mitigation and Community Benefit Fee – \$500,000 per Commercial SpaceX Launch

Submitted to:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Date: June 13, 2026

Submitted by:

Dorene White
1090 E Mountain Dr, Santa Barbara, CA 93108
dorenwhite0@gmail.com (805)886-7479
Santa Barbara County Resident

Executive Summary

Santa Barbara County is at the forefront of America's commercial space industry through SpaceX operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base. In 2025, Vandenberg recorded a record 71 launches (64 by SpaceX). Approvals are now in place to support up to **100 Falcon launches per year**.

While these launches generate significant economic benefits, they also impose concentrated costs on county infrastructure, public services, residents, and the environment. I therefore propose establishing a **Launch Mitigation and Community Benefit Fee of \$500,000 per commercial SpaceX launch**.

At 100 launches per year, this fee would generate **\$50 million annually** in dedicated revenue. These funds would offset direct impacts and support community priorities — without increasing taxes on local residents.

Background

Vandenberg Space Force Base has experienced explosive growth in launch activity. SpaceX dominates operations, primarily deploying Starlink satellites and conducting commercial and national security missions. The U.S. Space Force has approved expansion plans that could bring the annual cadence to 100 launches.

This growth supports thousands of jobs and over \$1 billion in regional economic activity. However, it also creates recurring localized burdens, including:

- Frequent road closures (Highway 1 and beach access)
- Noise, sonic booms, and vibrations affecting homes and wildlife
- Increased demand on emergency services and law enforcement
- Strain on housing, schools, and transportation infrastructure
- Environmental monitoring needs along the coast

Justification for the Fee

1. **Cost Recovery** Each launch requires substantial county resources for coordination, traffic control, public safety, and post-launch response. A \$500,000 fee is modest relative to the multi-million-dollar revenue each mission generates for SpaceX.
2. **Fair Share Principle** SpaceX benefits from Vandenberg's unique polar orbit access and public-adjacent infrastructure. The county and its residents bear disproportionate impacts. A dedicated fee ensures the community receives direct, tangible benefits.
3. **Emerging National Precedent** The FAA has begun charging user fees for commercial launches. Santa Barbara County can logically extend this principle to address local impacts not covered by federal mechanisms.
4. **Responsible Growth** A transparent mitigation fund demonstrates proactive governance, balancing economic opportunity with quality-of-life protections.

Proposed Fee Structure

- **Amount:** \$500,000 per commercial Falcon 9 or Falcon Heavy launch.
- **Exemptions:** Purely national security missions may be eligible for reduction or exemption (subject to negotiation).
- **Payment:** Due within 30 days of launch, via agreement with SpaceX and Space Force.
- **Escalation:** Annual adjustment for inflation (CPI) and periodic review every 3 years.
- **Fund:** All revenue deposited into a restricted **Santa Barbara County Space Launch Mitigation Fund** with annual public audits and reporting.

Sample Annual Budget (at 100 launches/year = \$50 million revenue)

Category	Allocation %	Annual Amount	Examples of Use
Infrastructure & Transportation	40%	\$20 million	Highway 1 and local road upgrades, traffic management technology, parking/overflow improvements, beach and coastal access enhancements
Environmental Monitoring & Restoration	25%	\$12.5 million	Expanded air and noise monitoring network, wildlife and marine habitat protection, coastal erosion control, sonic boom impact studies and mitigation
Housing & Workforce Development	15%	\$7.5 million	Affordable housing projects in Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Buellton; aerospace job training programs; workforce housing incentives
Public Safety & Emergency Services	15%	\$7.5 million	Sheriff and fire department overtime and staffing for launches, advanced emergency response equipment, public alert system upgrades
Community Grants & Education	5%	\$2.5 million	Residential noise insulation grants, school STEM programs, community parks and recreation improvements, resident relief funds

Total: \$50 million

Benefits to Santa Barbara County

- Provides a stable, dedicated revenue stream to manage growth.
- Funds proactive mitigation rather than reactive complaints.
- Strengthens the County's position in negotiations with commercial operators.
- Builds public trust by showing that space economy growth directly benefits residents.
- Positions Santa Barbara as a national model for responsible spaceport governance.

Potential Challenges & Responses

Concern: SpaceX may reduce operations.

Response: Vandenberg's strategic location for polar orbits is highly valuable. A reasonable mitigation fee is unlikely to change their commitment, especially with approved capacity for 100 launches.

Concern: Legal or jurisdictional issues.

Response: The County can pursue this through negotiated agreements, lease amendments, or local ordinances addressing road use, public safety, and environmental impacts.

Next Steps

1. Place this proposal on the next Board of Supervisors agenda for discussion.
2. Form a working group including County staff, Space Force, SpaceX representatives, and community stakeholders.
3. Commission a detailed independent study of launch-related costs and benefits.
4. Begin good-faith negotiations for implementation.

I appreciate the Board's leadership in balancing economic development with community well-being. I am available to present this proposal in person and provide any additional data.

Sincerely,

Dorene White

Dorene White

1090 E Mountain Dr.

Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Dorenwhite0@gmail.com | (805)886-7479

June 16, 2026

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 406

Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Proposal for \$500,000 per Commercial Launch Mitigation and Community Benefit Fee

Dear Members of the Board,

Santa Barbara County is experiencing rapid growth in SpaceX launch activity at Vandenberg Space Force Base. With launch cadence now approaching or exceeding 100 commercial launches per year, the county faces increasing strain on infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life.

I respectfully propose a **\$500,000 Launch Mitigation and Community Benefit Fee per commercial SpaceX launch**. This would generate approximately **\$50 million annually** in new dedicated revenue.

Proposed uses of funds include:

- Infrastructure & Transportation improvements: \$20 million
- Environmental monitoring and restoration: \$12.5 million
- Housing affordability and workforce training: \$7.5 million
- Public safety and emergency services: \$7.5 million
- Community grants and education programs: \$2.5 million

This approach ensures that commercial operators contribute fairly toward the localized costs they create while delivering major economic benefits to the region. It would allow Santa Barbara County to manage growth responsibly without raising taxes on residents.

I recommend forming a working group with County staff, Space Force, SpaceX, and community representatives to review impacts and negotiate implementation.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to discuss this proposal and provide additional supporting information.

Sincerely, Dorene White

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Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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Dorene White

Montecito resident