

Sheila de la Guerra

From: Pamela Baczuk <pambaczuk@fastmail.fm>
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To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment to the Board of Supervisors on the Environmental Justice Element



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To the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for reaching out to hear the comments from the broad community of residents in Santa Barbara County. I would like to acknowledge appreciation to First District Supervisor Roy Lee and his staff member Daisy Weber for the concern and active interest they have shown for the Cuyama Valley communities and their work to advocate for the Cuyama Valley. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Santa Barbara County Sustainability Division Manager Garrett Wong for his work to assist in important projects to help mitigate negative environmental impacts. Additionally the Community Environmental Council members including Em Johnson, Camila Leon, Bre Sliker, and Dominique Aranda have worked with community members to help build a more resilient Cuyama Valley.

We in the Cuyama Valley are grateful to have received important information, and helpful supplies and educational workshops from these various projects.

As you, the Supervisors are aware, the Cuyama Valley is comprised of three disadvantaged communities.

Some areas of consideration for which we would like you to consider for the future of Cuyama Valley are as follows:

1. Local access to healthy food. . The C&H market in town is stocked with mostly canned goods and snack items. There is very little fresh produce and other fresh foods available. The Taft supermarkets are 30 miles away and Santa Maria is 60 miles. We have for a number of years talked about how a farmer's market would be an asset to locals and helpful to our resident and local farmers to be seen by passers by on the highway. The permit process seems to have inhibited our ability to actually implement an outdoor farmer's market.
2. Housing. There are several empty houses that are not for sale nor up for rental. Whether upgrades are needed or the owners are reluctant to sell is unknown. If made available, these houses would provide needed living space for those who are sharing a house with another family.
3. Engage more with the three communities for bi-lingual workshops that include listening sessions for all residents and provide child care for these events. Although many events are bi-lingual, there are still some that would benefit with bi-lingual access.
4. Retail and Service based establishments that serve the community. Like access to healthy food, most basic needs are unavailable here. Space for these are almost non-existent.
5. The large agricultural businesses have reduced the all important groundwater. Water has levels of arsenic that require a dedicated filtration system provided by the Community Service District for the town of New Cuyama. Most residents do not drink the tap water. Affordable home filtration systems are needed. Old Cuyama and Ventucopa have significant water issues as well.

6. In addition to depleting the groundwater, the large agricultural fields, when fallow, are a source of an unhealthy amount of dust that we breathe, and invades our houses through any spaces around windows and doors.

7. Our schools have been struggling for a number of years and have only recently been able to balance their budget with cuts and funding assistance. There are still needs to be met.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts.

Pamela Baczuk

Resident, New Cuyama