

DOCKETED

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Salton City Residents Public Comment on Lithium

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

August 18, 2022

Dear Lithium Valley Commission,

My name is Dora Cecilia Tapia, I have been a resident of Salton City for almost 30 years. I participated in the community panel hosted by the Lithium Valley Commission on July 21, 2022 and would like to take this opportunity to uplift the comments I made in that space. Below you will find a response to some of the specific questions made towards community representatives during that community panel. I developed these comments in collaboration with other residents in my community and therefore these are representative of a number of Salton City residents. I ask that these are seriously considered in future discussions and implemented into the report that the Commission will be releasing soon.

Sincerely,

Dora Cecilia Tapia

Community Engagement / Information Sharing

1. What are some best examples you can share for how local agencies or businesses communicate efficiently with community residents?

Answer: There should be informative means of information sharing like using flyers and I also collaborating with local agencies in which I participate as a volunteer and member of the community.

2. Is there information you still need to understand what is planned and occurring and what is the best way for you to receive information?

Answer: Yes of course, I think there should be more information at the community level in terms that are understandable and clear that inform us about exactly what lithium extraction means to our communities.

What I mean by this is; that things should be thoroughly explained on exactly what will happen with this extraction, we all ask ourselves what will happen with our health given that this is a chemical, and there is fear in many aspects of said topic. So I ask the people who own these projects, have you given yourself the task of visiting all of our communities including; Salton City, North Shore, Calipatria, Niland, Bombay beach, and Westmorland etc? To know what we think of said project. You can have pages online to keep us informed... but remember that there are people who do not know how to use zoom, computers or phones, etc. My suggestion is that they form a committee of 5 or more people from the lithium extraction project and community representatives and local organizations so that you are aware of our opinion and that these are taken into consideration for your report. I offer myself as a volunteer to these visits to our communities.

In our communities there are farm workers who deserve to be informed about what is happening so that their opinions and concerns are heard. Lets look for ways and strategies to communicate this information efficiently so that residents do not believe that ill intentioned comments they hear. This is what my people would like to see, accessible information from the lithium extraction companies delivered in one-on-one conversations with community residents.

Community Benefits / Investments

1. The Lithium Valley Commission understands that the residents in the region want to see investment in communities from the new activities. What are your top priorities for new investments and improvements?

Answer: Here comes the good part...I remember that in June of this year an informative column was published from Imperial County where they talked about SB 125 and the local investments and infrastructure in local communities of Imperial County which would be guaranteed through the said lithium extraction project. They said that we the local residents will see improvements in the local infrastructure, public safety, environment etc, but the interesting thing about these reports are that some cities are mentioned thanking them for their great support in this project.

Now, I think of my community of Salton City and nearby cities. These cities do not appear in this list for said infrastructure plans and new changes, what must we do to be taken into account in these projects? I keep myself informed by participating in the lithium extraction virtual meeting and in panels just like this one today. I see with sadness that my city of Salton City is not being taken into account for these improvements of infrastructure and local needs of Salton City and similar cities, we belong to the Imperial County. We have an Imperial County representative, Mr. Ryan Kelly ... I would like for him to advocate for us and represent us responsibly and take us into account in these changes since we have always been the abandoned community, the ghost town, and the ones who conform with what they have. I think that as a representative of my community and the city of Salton City we also want to see new changes that other cities already have and we don't.

I think about many improvements for my community. For example, I ask that you use said investments from the extraction of lithium so that our cities have proper infrastructure and can stop being an ugly town, ghost town or conformist. I share the following, our population has grown considerably, in the year 2000 there were 978 inhabitants, in 2010 - 3763 inhabitants and in 2020 - 5433 and even more that have arrived in these past two years, as you can see we are more families that live in this city and we need more infrastructural resources, health clinics, decent parks, good roads, proper street lighting, and I could spend all day telling you all that our cities need because I live in Salton City but in itself the whole community I represent is from Desert Shore, Salton Sea Beach, Ocean View until Silver Sand, please, we ask you to be part of these improvements as they said in a documentary, the hope of lithium extraction rekindles the hope in the Salton Sea...then give me the hope that I will be heard and not ignored, included and not excluded in their decisions towards making improvements in all the cities around the Salton Sea we want to be part of this history of improvements with the hope that maybe not I will get to see it but my children, grandchildren and future generations of my community can. I want to be useful and not discriminate

against wanting a better future where we can say "let's go to the city of Salton City" without them saying no because it is very bad and ugly and there is nothing to do for fun.

Environmental Impacts and Public Health

Our health is our first priority in our communities, will our public health be put at risk? In all the areas around the Salton Sea there should be a set of criteria to help the advancement of public health and environmental wellbeing. For example; include us in the decision making process for future projects. Being included helps us be useful in the future project development and job creation in our community. When it comes to infrastructure and workforce development we need opportunities that will ensure stability in our families. Needs in our communities include; ecological health, environmental health, water quality in the Salton Sea, public transportation, accessible housing, infrastructure. Please keep these in mind.