



Riverside County Sheriff's Office

Chad Bianco, Sheriff-Coroner

4095 Lemon Street • Riverside • California • 92501
www.riversidesheriff.org

April 4, 2023

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

As the Sheriff of Riverside County, I strongly urge you to reconsider the closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP), located in the City of Blythe. The closure of this facility would have a significant impact not only on Blythe's local economy but also on law enforcement and public safety efforts in the region.

Chuckawalla is a critical component of the region's criminal justice system, providing a secure facility to house and rehabilitate inmates. Closing this facility would strain the resources of our law enforcement agencies and make it more difficult to keep our communities safe. Chuckawalla distinguishes itself in the number of rehabilitation resources it makes available to its inmates. It offers 37 robust inmate rehabilitation programs, and partners with support organizations such as the nearby Metcalf Recovery Ranch. These resources are critical in reducing recidivism rates and ultimately reducing crime rates.

Chuckawalla is also an important training facility for correctional officers, providing vital training to the men and women who maintain our state's prisons. This closure would result in the loss of a critical training facility, and consequently make it more difficult to train new officers and maintain the high standards that our law enforcement agencies require.

The closure would also result in the loss of critical resources for law enforcement such as the Palo Verde Hospital. The Palo Verde Hospital is the only community hospital within a 50 mile radius of the City of Blythe. This facility provides medical care to local residents including victims of violent crimes, as well as inmates of the neighboring Ironwood State Prison. It's not clear this hospital's operations would still be viable if Chuckawalla were to close, and this would result in a higher demand for medical services from other hospitals and emergency responders.

Additionally, Chuckawalla plays a crucial role in Blythe's local community and economy. As one of the top employers in the City, Chuckawalla provides jobs to 852 Blythe and Coachella Valley residents. Blythe's Palo Verde College would lose over 250 full-time equivalent students due to this closure because the college pioneered an inmate education program that has since become a statewide program. Being a rural community with few economic prospects, Blythe offers a low cost of living to the families of inmates. The prison's closure would have the unintended

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consequence of forcing these families to relocate to stay near their loved ones, and this could mean intense financial strain.

For these reasons, I stand with the City of Blythe and urge you to reconsider your proposed closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison. The City of Blythe, as well as the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss the impact this closure would have. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me directly at (951) 955-0147. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Bianco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "B".

CHAD BIANCO, SHERIFF