



# RIVERSIDE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Representing the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Professionals of the County of Riverside, California

June 5, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

The Riverside Sheriffs' Association represents over 4,500 public safety professionals in Riverside County and we are writing to urge you to oppose the closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison in Blythe, California as proposed in pending 2022-23 State budget.

Chuckawalla Valley State Prison plays a central role in the City of Blythe's economy. As one of Blythe's top employers, the prison supplies over 850 jobs, and is the main reason many residents make the City of Blythe their home. Blythe offers a low cost of living for full-time residents as well as families of the incarcerated. If inmates are forced to move, their families could face costly housing increases or even homelessness. Families of prison employees, including Blythe's teachers, public servants, and essential workers, would also have to relocate.

Additionally, Blythe residents would feel the impacts of the closure through a noticeable decline in the services the City would be able to provide to address business closures, loss of related jobs in sites such as school districts and decreased sales and property taxes from residents migrating out of the city.

Currently, 22.4% of Blythe's population lives in poverty (Census, 2021) and the California [State Auditor Dashboard](#) ranked Blythe as 9th on the Distressed Cities Index, which ranks 430 California cities based on their financial health. If Chuckawalla Valley State Prison were to close, the economic effects on Blythe would be devastating.

Respectfully, we also propose an alternative - the you consider closing California Rehabilitation Center in Norco instead. Community leaders in Blythe are enthusiastic supporters of their local prison. This is in contrast to many residents of Norco, California who have been advocating for the closure of the California

Rehabilitation Center for years. As a comparatively expensive prison located in a bustling area where prison closure would not have a significant effect on the local economy, the movement to save Chuckawalla Valley State Prison advocates closure of the CRC in lieu of Chuckawalla.

As an elected representative, you have a responsibility to act in accordance with the will of the people. Your voice is critical in this effort, and you would not be alone in opposing the proposed closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison. You would be joining a diverse coalition of Blythe residents, organizations, and fellow legislators united around the mission to 'Save Chuck'. You can learn more about this effort at [SaveChuck.org](http://SaveChuck.org). We thank you for your attention to this important issue and implore you to take a stand for the people of Blythe.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding this request. I can be reached at (916) 580-5464.

Sincerely,



Ryan Sherman  
Director, Government Affairs  
Riverside Sheriffs' Association