



# San Bernardino County Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association

November 13, 2023

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom Governor,  
State of California  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

I write to you as the President of the San Bernardino County Chiefs of Police and Sheriff Association with an urgent plea to reevaluate the proposed closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison as stated in your 2022-23 State budget.

The planned shutdown of this facility not only jeopardizes the economic stability of the City of Blythe but also foreshadows a potential significant escalation in homelessness, exacerbating the current crisis within California particularly impacting Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Chuckawalla Valley State Prison is not merely an institution but a linchpin of the Blythe community, providing over 850 jobs and underpinning the local economy. The repercussions of its closure would be multifold: families of inmates could be catapulted into economic uncertainty or homelessness due to elevated housing costs; employees, including vital public sector workers, would face relocation; and the city would suffer from reduced capacity to fund and provide essential services.

Blythe is already grappling with a 22.4% poverty rate, and its financial health has been flagged as distressed. The closure of Chuckawalla would undeniably plunge the city into further economic despair.

In light of these concerns, I advocate for an alternative solution: the closure of the California Rehabilitation Center in Norco. This proposal is not made lightly but stems from a critical assessment of both facilities' impacts on their respective communities. Unlike Blythe, Norco's economic structure can sustain the closure of its correctional facility without devastating consequences. In addition, Community leaders in Blythe are - unlike nearly every other prison community - enthusiastic supporters of their local prison. This contrasts Norco, California residents who have been advocating for the closure of the California Rehabilitation Center for years.

Closing Chuckawalla would ignore the voices of a united Blythe community, a coalition of residents, organizations, and legislators rallying to 'Save Chuck.' I implore you to visit [SaveChuck.org](http://SaveChuck.org) to understand the depth of this movement.

Your leadership is critical in ensuring that economic and social stability are maintained for the people of Blythe. I trust you will consider the grave implications of the prison's closure and act in a manner that prioritizes the welfare of our communities.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Michael Lorenz, the President of the San Bernardino County Chiefs of Police and Sheriff Association.

Michael Lorenz President,  
San Bernardino County Chiefs of Police and Sheriff Association