

Monday, July 28, 2020

Division Chief Office of Community Air Protection
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814

San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization
4747 North First Street, Suite 140
Fresno, CA 93726

RE: Support for City of Arvin for AB 617 Community Selection for year 3

Dear AB 617 Community Selection Committee:

The San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization (SJVCEO) is pleased to offer our enthusiastic support for the nomination of the City of Arvin as a third year AB 617 community. As an organization, we are a strong advocate for rural and hard-to-reach communities and the City of Arvin is no exception. This region is working tirelessly to make strides in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, mitigating the negative effects of climate change, and improving air quality for their residents. We believe that public agencies are uniquely positioned to influence the communities around them, and Arvin has filled this leadership role among similarly positioned local agencies in this region. A selection for the third year implementation of the AB 617 Community Air Protection Program would bolster Arvin's positive influence.

The SJVCEO is a regionally based nonprofit committed to improving the quality of life for rural Californians. We do this through partnerships with local public agencies, utility companies, other community-based organizations, and leaders in education and business. In recent years, we have had the honor of working with City of Arvin to provide technical assistance in the form of energy benchmarking, project management support as well as expanding community access to utility programs. Together, the SJVCEO and City of Arvin worked to benchmark all 33 of Arvin's utility accounts within the Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM) tool. ESPM is an online database used to track energy usage, energy use intensity of Arvin's facilities, as well as Green House Gas Emissions. Recently, we have worked with the City of Arvin on energy efficiency projects such as, the completion of LED retrofits in all of Arvin's city-owned buildings. This project alone saved nearly 80,000 kWh per year which is the equivalent to taking 12 passenger vehicles off the road. The SJVCEO and City of Arvin continue our work together to identify and execute opportunities such as this.

The San Joaquin Valley has had a decades-long struggle with improving air quality due to the geographical features of the region. Furthermore, the City of Arvin is at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley at the base of the Tehachapi mountain range, which effectively traps air pollution causing serious local air quality problems. City of Arvin is committed to improving public health and safety by constructing infrastructure improvements that reduce air pollution to help the region meet clean air mandates.

We write this letter to express our full support for City of Arvin to be selected for the third year implementation of the AB 617 Community Air Protection Program. We are not alone in this recommendation. The San Joaquin Valley AB 617 Environmental Justice Steering Committee (SVJ-AB617-EJ-SC) ranked Arvin-Lamont as the number one area in the Rural category in the nomination document they submitted to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SVJAPCD). This nomination was the result of a thorough analysis of indicators that included population characteristics, regional and local air pollution; health data as well as the capacity from community-based organizations that is necessary to successfully engage with residents, the Air District and CARB in the AB 617 CAPP process.

Given the vast benefits from this project, the SVJCEO is honored to continue our partnership with the City of Arvin to support this meaningful and much needed work. Thank you for your consideration, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Courtney Kalashian".

Courtney Kalashian
Executive Director