



**Legislative Advocacy Forum
February 24, 2020
Agenda**

Chair: Melanie Vollbrecht
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM, Zoom

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| I. | Call to Order | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| II. | Self-Introductions | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| III. | Approval of Minutes | Melanie Vollbrecht |
| IV. | <u>Legislative Updates</u> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senator Feinstein• Congresswoman Brownley• Congressman Garcia• Senator Stern• Assemblywoman Valladares• Supervisor Huber• City of Simi Valley• Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District• U.S. Chamber of Commerce• Southern California Edison• Simi Valley Unified School District• Metropolitan Water District of Southern California• Calleguas Muncipal Water District• California State University Channel Islands• Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce | Geneva Monteleone
Megan Bland
Charles Navarro
Nicholas Gaines
Javier Reyes
Joel Angeles
Samantha Argabrite
Elaine Freeman
Vartan Djihanian
Rudy Gonzales
Jason Peplinski
Jacque McMillan
Daniel Drugan
Celina Zacarias
Samantha Shapiro |
| V. | Other Business | |
| VI. | Adjourn | |

Next meeting: March 24, 2021 – 8:00 AM

Disclaimer: The Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce Legislative Advocacy Forum is a committee of the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee acts as a forum for discussion about legislative activity and provides the Board of Directors with recommendations for decisions. Comments made at committee meetings do not represent the views of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce or the Board of Directors.

Present: Samantha Argabrite, Samantha Shapiro, Maral Kirakosian, Jacque McMillan, Nico Martin, James Lodenquai, Melanie Vollbrecht, Elizabeth Zachary, Amy Corneau, Harry Van Dyck, Dan Drugan, Charles Navarro, Lisa Lewis, Brian Reed, Jason Peplinski, Kathi Van Etten, Elaine Freeman, Rudy Gonzales, Robert McDonald, Geneva Monteleone, Mke Garcia, Javier Reyes, Mike Nolan, Karen Troop, Gloria Bowman, Celina Zacarias, Francisco de la Torre, Tricia Johnston, Jim Vigdor

Call to Order – 8:03 AM

Legislative Updates:

Senator Feinstein: Geneva Monteleone reported on behalf of the Senator

- They are excited to introduce and re-introduce new bills into the new session
- They are waiting a few weeks until the new administration has a chance to get through their new appointments

Congresswoman Brownley: Robert McDonald reported on behalf of the Congresswoman.

- The Congresswoman was named the chair of the Women’s Veterans Task Force. She is focused on areas such as recognizing women’s veterans and their contributions to the veterans community, as well as supporting the families of women veterans
- They announced the winner of the congressional art contest
- They will be announcing the winner of the congressional app challenge; they saw a 400% increase in participation from past years
- They are hoping to have a passport fair in 2021 but nothing is confirmed yet

Congressman Mike Garcia: Congressman Garcia reported to the committee.

- The congressman is focusing on meaningful legislation to help businesses recover
- He introduced HR 202 which addresses the salt cap removal bill
- He has been appointed to the appropriations committee and the space, science and technology committee
- There were 25 military academy appointments
- He is focusing on continuing to provide relief to businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis
- He supported the new PPP and the \$2,000 stimulus checks (will continue to support the additional \$1,400 stimulus to individuals)
- He is pushing to reopen schools and businesses while continuing to mitigate the spread of COVID through masks and social distancing for those who are healthy
- He supports the vaccination efforts and co-sponsored legislation asking those who administer the vaccine to not let it go to waste; more flexibility in the administration of the vaccine so that none is wasted if an appointment opens up, etc.
- He is hosting a webinar on PPP for Simi Valley on Thursday, January 28th

Assembly Member Valladares: Javier Reyes reported on behalf of the Assembly Member.

- The Assembly Member has a number of committee appointments including the arts, entertainment, sports, tourism committee, higher education, communications and conveyance, and some budget committees.
- She introduced AB 91, which would be a franchise tax deduction for small and microbusinesses, reducing the fee from the regular \$800 to \$400 for “small” businesses and \$200 for “micro” businesses annually.
- She is focused on strategy and effective distribution of the vaccine, EDD claims, and being available and ready to serve the residents of her district.

City of Simi Valley: Samantha Argabrite reported on the City of Simi Valley.

- The City attended the CPUC hearing related to the SCE PSPS events yesterday. The PSPS events have been impacting our city greatly, both our residents and businesses.
- Mayor Mashburn gave a compelling presentation at the hearing representing our businesses and citizens, and many citizens attended as well to share their experiences.
- One ask of the city was that SCE should financially reimburse residents who have been impacted by the PSPS beyond just the wasted food reimbursement claim.

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District: Elaine Freeman reported on the RSRPD.

- Special districts (including RSRPD) were not included in legislation for industries that can be reimbursed for impact of COVID, so they are concerned by that and looking to address that impact on the RSRPD.
- They are trying to get everything open as much as possible based on the new guidelines from the state (purple tier).

Southern California Edison: Rudy Gonzales reported on SCE.

- SCE knows that communities are frustrated with the PSPS situation and they are working on plans to minimize the impact of PSPS. The plans will likely reduce the impact to Simi Valley residents and businesses by 50-60%.
- The purpose of the PSPS are to keep the SCE facilities from initiating a large wildfire situation.
- They are working on a more targeted plan to minimize the impact.
- There are no plans to eliminate the PSPS program but changes are forthcoming.
- They need to do a better job at communicating accurate and timely information and notifications.

Simi Valley Unified School District: Dr. Jason Peplinski reported on SVUSD.

- SVUSD does not need any more COVID relief funds, but they need money for vaccinating their employees and they need more flexibility with public health in the vaccination process.
- They need to reopen their school campuses at all levels; elementary is already back to in-person instruction and there has been no indication of COVID coming from their campuses.
- They are prepared for in-person instruction as soon as the go-ahead is given from the state.
- They are seeing an increase in mental health challenges with middle and high school students as a result of the isolation of remote learning.
- Legislation they are looking at includes:
 - SB 70 – require 1 year of kindergarden to be completed before 1st grade (support)
 - AB 53 – make election day a national holiday (support to eliminate the risk of having students on campus when many people are coming through to use the schools for voting locations)
 - AB 10 & 76 – require school districts to have in-person instruction if they are in that tier (support)
 - AB 33 – require no more natural gas connections at public schools (oppose because they would not be able to safely have science classes such as chemistry and physics)

- AB 95 – bereavement leave extension to 10 days at the expense of the employer (oppose)

Metropolitan Water District – Jacque McMillan

- Jacque would like to give a presentation related to the geology of the Santa Clara river and how that can and might impact the Simi Valley area
- A number of groundwater basins have overdrafted; the laws in place related to overdrafting of groundwater basins and their need to be self-sustainable is not attainable, so MWD and other water agencies including Calleguas are working to create a solution for this problem
- It is projected to be a dry year, however there is sufficient water for 3 – 4 years

Calleguas Water District – Dan Drugan

- It has been a dry start to the year
- They are facing new water budgets from the state
- They have a new director, Raul Avila, who will join at future meetings

California State University Channel Islands: Celina Zacarias reported

- Former CI president Erika Beck accepted a new position at CSUN
- They will begin their nationwide search for a new president in Summer 2021
- CI remains virtual through Fall 2021
- Acceptance letters/notifications will be going out soon; students must “accept” the notification in order to secure their spot

Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce: Samantha Shapiro reported

- The Chamber continues to support businesses through this time with promotions and advocacy
- Continues to meet with the Task Force on Business Recovery, including Supervisor Huber’s office and City of Simi Valley staff
- The Chamber was happy to see the Governor lifted the stay at home order and outdoor dining and personal services were able to resume; this will help some of these hard hit industries move forward and recover
- Shop Simi Valley First had a successful Fa La La Local holiday campaign to encourage local spending and support, and will launch a spring promotion soon.
- Meet & Mingle mixer was a success and gave our elected officials an opportunity to meet with the business community
- Happy with the second round of PPP funding and the inclusion of the 501c6 organizations in the eligible organizations

Adjourn – 9:00 AM