



**Legislative Advocacy Forum  
September 23, 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"><li>• Senator Feinstein</li><li>• Congresswoman Brownley</li><li>• Congressman Garcia</li><li>• Senator Stern</li><li>• Assemblywoman Smith</li><li>• Supervisor Huber</li><li>• City of Simi Valley</li><li>• Rancho Simi Recreation &amp; Park District</li><li>• U.S. Chamber of Commerce</li><li>• Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce</li><li>• Southern California Edison</li><li>• Simi Valley Unified School District</li><li>• Metropolitan Water District of Southern California</li><li>• Calleguas Municipal Water District</li><li>• California State University Channel Islands</li><li>• Southern California Gas</li></ul> | Becca Channell<br>Megan Bland<br>Charles Navarro<br>Nicholas Gaines<br>Ryan Valencia<br>Joel Angeles<br>Samantha Argabrite<br>Elaine Freeman<br>Vartan Djihanian<br>Samantha Shapiro<br>Rudy Gonzales<br>Jason Peplinski<br>Jacque McMillan<br>Daniel Drugan<br>Celina Zacarias<br>Maria Ventura |
| V.   | Other Business  |  |
| VI.  | Adjourn   |  |

Next meeting: October 28, 2020 – 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 Shapiro, Thom Slosson, Jason Peplinski, Daniel Drugan, Nick Gaines, Charles Navarro, Amy Corneau, Kathi Van Etten, Karen Troop, Maral Kirakosian, Elaine Litster, Cindy Slack, Brian Reed, Jacque McMillan, Samantha Argabrite, Elaine Freeman, Harry Van Dyck, Celina Zacarias, Becca Channell, John Tolson, Gena Barnhart, Vartan Djihanian, Rhonda Mayer, Jennifer Swenson, Suzette Valladares

Call to Order – 8:04 AM

**Meeting Minutes:** Elaine Freeman made a motion to approve the minutes from July. Harry Van Dyck seconded the motion. All in favor. The minutes were approved.

### Legislative Updates

#### **Senator Feinstein – Becca Channell:**

- Negotiations on the relief package are hopefully coming soon
- The Senator’s priorities for the package include aid to state and local government, support for additional PPP and SBA loan programs, inclusion of 501c6 organizations
- She has also introduced a bill providing \$25B in relief to the post office
- She has also introduced a wildfire prevention bill to give additional funds to reduce fuels that produce wildfires

#### **Congressman Garcia – Charles Navarro:**

- Negotiations for COVID relief; there is a financial difference between the bills that will need to be resolved to move forward
- The Congressman put forward a STEM fellowship bill to allow a continuation of their studies
- There will be a new addition of the Space Force HQ in Palmdale
- They continue to monitor the Angeles National Forest Fire
- In California, individuals on unemployment should soon see the \$400 addition to their benefits

#### **Senator Stern – Nick Gaines**

- The discussions about the county monitoring list metrics have been discussed but the state seems very set on keeping the metrics as they are. The Senator’s office is pushing for clarity on safely reopening
- They are making sure they have a more coherent stream of work/resources that can be sent out to businesses
- Their legislative session ends on August 31<sup>st</sup>
- They continue to monitor the wildfire situation/season/ 97% of the state’s fire resources are taking care of the situation up in Northern California currently
- They are working on both the PSPS issues that many businesses faced last wildfire season, as well as continuing their work on the COVID pandemic

#### **City of Simi Valley – Samantha Argabrite**

- The City will be offering rental assistance and business assistance loans through CBDG and CARES Act funds
- The program guidelines are very extensive and should be finalized within the next week or two. The program will be distributed and marketed to all businesses
- City council approved an update to the ordinance re: ED charging stations

- City council approved a change to the Citizens Election Advisory Commission
- The city hall main counter is open from 9 am – 5 pm with a lunch break from 12 pm – 1 pm.
- All city services are open remotely
- They haven't been hearing land use public hearings as they are waiting for the public to be able to comment

#### **RSRPD – Elaine Freeman**

- The district received a \$1M grant to extend the Arroyo Greenway project from Sequoia to Tapo Canyon. Initially the thought was this project would be over the course of 50 years but this will move it forward
- The new skatepark is operational. They had a small hiccup with the park but they have worked it out to make it available for the community during COVID
- The district is now debt free

#### **US Chamber of Commerce – Vartan Djhhanian**

- Similar to the federal legislators, the US Chamber is pushing for the new federal aid package
- They are happy to see Sen. Feinstein and Rep. Garcia both support the inclusion of 501c6 organizations in additional aid bills
- They urge the federal representatives to pass a bill quickly as the session gets closer to the end of the year and businesses need relief

#### **Simi Valley Unified School District – Jason Peplinski**

- The school district needs flexibility in how they can spend the money they have received
- Financially the district is doing okay
- They need things to not change so quickly as far as regulations; they are following three different levels of guidance and they do not align
- They need guidance that stays the same for at least a week
- The Board decided that they would not be exploring the waiver option and would not be returning to in-person instruction until the county is approved to move forward and reopen
- They are in a good place to move forward with in-person instruction when it is possible
- They are doing the best they can with the frequent information changes; it makes it hard to remain consistent
- They would appreciate a relaxation in the mandated trainings for their employees. Some are impossible to do via Zoom and the strict deadlines are somewhat unreasonable given that the trainings apply to in-person instruction

#### **Metropolitan Water District – Jacque McMillan**

- The delta conveyance issue continues to be discussed. The project will be 1 tunnel and will have a \$15.9B expense
- They are looking into Ab 2560

#### **California State University Channel Islands – Celina Zacarias**

- Classes are all virtual through the semester; there are a small exception of classes that are being held in-person that cannot be virtual, like their nursing classes
- Strict social distancing guidelines are being enforced on campus, both indoors and outdoors, including wearing a mask on campus
- The majority of staff are virtual at this point (with only about 10 people on campus to keep things running); if anyone needs to be connected, they can contact Celina

## **Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce – Samantha Shapiro**

- The Chamber continues to meet with County Supervisor Huber’s office and City staff on the Task Force on Business Recovery. The met with the state delegation earlier this month to discuss the county monitoring list metrics and safely reopening, and met with the federal delegation to urge action on a new bill
- The Chamber is drafting a letter to the Governor urging him to reassess the metrics on the county monitoring list and to provide long term security to businesses to reopen
- The Chamber continues to watch the legislation as it is being voted on in the state legislature
- The Chamber will be hosting a 2-part candidate forum on 9/30 and 10/1 with candidates running for US Congress, State Senate, State Assembly, Simi Valley Mayor, Simi Valley City Council, SVUSD Board, RSRPD Board, Calleguas Municipal Water District, and VCCCD Board. The event will be free to attend and will also have a virtual meet and greet element after the formal program
- The Chamber will be partnering with the Chambers of Commerce Alliance in Ventura County to host the State of the County address with CEO Mike Powers on September 17<sup>th</sup>

Adjourn – 9 AM