TIMELINE ON LUS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON MINING ORDINANCE

Timeline regarding public engagement from San Bernardino County Department of Land Use Services for Mining Ordinance revision, Project No. PMISC-2026-00029: An ordinance to repeal and reenact Chapter 88.03 of the San Bernardino County Development Code related to local surface mining and land reclamation regulations.

November 13, 2023: Per the staff report of the County Department of Land Use Service (LUS), the public were not considered to be stakeholders and were not included in any communications or discussions of this issue prior to presenting this ordinance to the Planning Commission for approval.

> "An initial stakeholder meeting occurred on November 13, 2023, where County staff provided a presentation informing stakeholders of proposed updates to Chapter 88.03. **Stakeholders included local mining operators and the California Construction and Industrial Materials Association** (CalCIMA). County staff received comments from the mining operators requesting that CalCIMA coordinate with the County throughout the process to ensure the updates are comprehensive and incorporate all applicable changes to SMARA. Stakeholders expressed support for the update during the stakeholder meeting. County staff then collaborated with CalCIMA to prepare an update to Chapter 88.03 and develop an initial draft of the ordinance. The initial draft of the proposed ordinance was then submitted to SMGB for comments during the board's November 20, 2025, regular business meeting. Following discussion, the SMGB had no comments for the County's consideration."

July 8, 2026: Many Morongo Basin residents learned for the first time about the mining ordinance revision proposal through an emailed news article from the *Desert Trumpet*, and learned that it was scheduled to be presented to the County Planning Commission the following day.

July 9, 2026: The Planning Commission approved the mining ordinance, despite 100 written comments and 32 speakers who opposed the passage of the ordinance, with several mentioning the short notice of the PC meeting.

August 18, 2026: The proposal was heard by the Board of Supervisors, and the Board acknowledged LUS's failure to inform the public and instructed LUS staff to engage with the public and ensure their questions were answered. There were 22 in-person comments in opposition to the ordinance as written.

August 24, 2026: The entire LUS management team attended a general info meeting hosted by Friends of Wonder Valley. Mr. Figueroa stated at the beginning of the meeting that he wanted to bring the whole management team to Wonder Valley simply to meet the community. The topic of this meeting was NOT the mining ordinance, but rather a general info meeting, similar to previous meetings with Fire Department info meetings or County Road services info meetings. The LUS Management team included: Director, Assistant Director, Planning Chief, Building Official, Land Development Chief, Code Enforcement Supervisor, Code Enforcement Officer stationed in Joshua Tree, and a Communication Analyst. There were roughly 20-25 people in attendance at this meeting. Most of the topics the community raised were related to Code Enforcement, including building permits and dumping. *(*Please see comments under "October 20, 2026" entry, below.)*

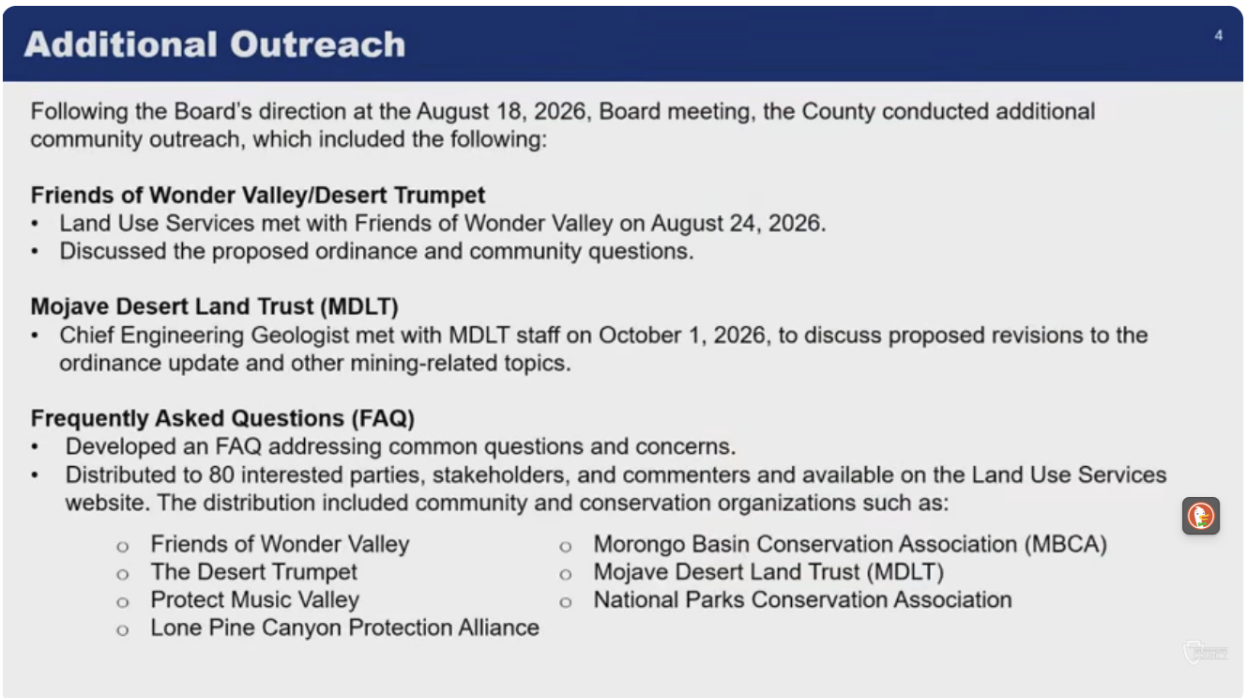
September 9, 2026: Protect Music Valley emailed Mr. Figueroa, Director of Land Use Services, informing him that a group of community members had come together to form *Protect Music Valley* and requesting to be added to LUS's 'Interested Party' list. We also let him know that we have questions and requested to engage with LUS as the Board of Supervisors instructed. No response was received.

September 27, 2026: Protect Music Valley emailed Mr. Figueroa again, noting there had been no response to our previous letter and asking "How and when will community stakeholders have an opportunity to participate?"

September 29, 2026: LUS sent out an unsigned, generic email which included an amended "redline" version of the revision proposal and a 'FAQ' document. This communication also included an email address to send any additional questions. Of note, this generic email was sent out six weeks after the BOS meeting and only three weeks before the mining ordinance would return to the BOS for discussion.

October 20, 2026: The amended mining ordinance revision proposal returned to the Board of Supervisors. Seventy-five written comments had been submitted to LUS between 8/18 and 10/20.

During the LUS presentation at the hearing, LUS Director Miguel Figueroa displayed this slide:



Per the transcript of the hearing, Mr. Figueroa stated, "On August 24th and August 26, Land Use Services staff visited Wonder Valley and 29 Palms to meet with community leaders to hear firsthand their comments and concerns about *general issues [emphasis by the speaker]* occurring in the area. However, we were also informed about continuous concerns related to this mining ordinance."

In addition, Mr. Figueroa stated, "Land Use Services conducted public outreach by meeting with community organizations including Friends of Wonder Valley, Desert Trumpet and the Mojave Desert Land Trust to discuss concerns regarding the proposed mining ordinance update, and explain the benefits of the revisions."

To be clear: Wonder Valley is an unincorporated area of the County and has no official representation as a community or designated community leaders.

First, let us address the "meeting" with Friends of Wonder Valley.

Friends of Wonder Valley is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community services organization. From their website, their Purpose is *"to support the Wonder Valley Community, and the Wonder Valley Community Center, through fundraising and programming."* Their Mission: *"Friends of Wonder Valley seek to enhance the lives of the people in Wonder Valley by providing programs that engage residents and build community, including arts, music, theater, education, food, health, recreation, and others as need arises and our capacity increases."*

The Friends of Wonder Valley meeting was not about the mining ordinance. It was their regular monthly meeting, and on Aug 4, weeks before the instruction from the Supervisors at the Aug 18 hearing, it was promoted thusly:

> We are happy to welcome the members of San Bernardino County Land Use Services (LUS) Executive Leadership team:
>
> - Miguel Figueroa, Director of Land Use Services
> - Thomas Bustamonte, Assistant Director
> - Maged Soliman, Building Official
> - Ignacio Nunez, Code Enforcement Chief
> - Kevin Marstall, Land Development Chief
> - Paul Gonzales, Planning Chief
> - Amelia Maldonado, Communications Analyst
>
> They will present, take questions, and provide answers. LUS issues that may be addressed concern dark skies, dump sites, development, and mining.
>
> One other item on the agenda addresses whether or not to have SBC Behavioral Health present to the community in September, and on which topic.
>
> Everyone is welcome to attend and participate.

The LUS team announced at the outset that they had only 45 minutes for the meeting, during which brief time the seven officials each introduced themselves and their departments and, in the minutes remaining, took a few questions. Most of those questions regarded code enforcement, a perennial concern for local residents. There was no presentation on the mining ordinance whatsoever, no discussion of the proposed ordinance or explanation of its benefits, and no realistic time to have any dialogue on that complex subject. The meeting had not been advertised as an opportunity to discuss or learn about the ordinance.

As one Wonder Valley resident commented at the Board of Supervisors meeting after hearing Mr. Figueroa's claim, "I was frankly shocked a few minutes ago to hear Land Use Services talk about a meeting with friends of Wonder Valley as part of the outreach effort around this ordinance. I am part of that group. I was at that meeting. That meeting was not about this ordinance. We were advised to raise other issues whether it had to do with dumping and other areas of concern. So, I'm not quite sure why you are misinforming the board of supervisors and this entire group on the purpose for that meeting."

Second, regarding the "meeting" with the *Desert Trumpet*:

The *Desert Trumpet* is a news organization based in the Morongo Basin. From their website: *"The Desert Trumpet is a local news publication which seeks to increase political engagement and encourage a participatory political process by reporting on city government. Our focus is on Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley as well as Joshua Tree and other unincorporated areas of the Morongo Basin. Our goal is to report on social justice, equity and environmental issues throughout the Morongo Basin, as well as provide a forum for residents to interact on these issues. The Desert Trumpet is published by Morongo Basin Projects, a 501c3 charitable organization."*

In their report on the Oct 20 hearing, the *Desert Trumpet* stated the following: "As for Figueroa's reference to the *Desert Trumpet*, we reviewed our transcript of the conversation. He is referring to our August 26 interview with him in Twentynine Palms, which also included Planning Chief Paul Gonzales, Communications Analyst Amelia Maldonado and City Manager Kevin Cole, and was published September 14 as 'The New Team At San Bernardino County Land Use Services.' *The mining ordinance came up twice, both times as an example of the difficulty of noticing a countywide item. Its content was not discussed, and no one from the department asked for our views on it." (Emphasis added.)*

Third, regarding the meeting with Mojave Desert Land Trust:

Mojave Desert Land Trust is 501(c)(3) organization. From their website, "The Mojave Desert Land Trust has cultivated a multi-faceted conservation strategy that uses land acquisition, restoration, stewardship, plant cultivation, and education to ensure the long-term preservation of the California desert."

While we respect the work that MDLT does, MDLT is not a spokesperson for, nor does it represent Wonder Valley or the Morongo Basin, when speaking with San Bernardino County representatives, such as Land Use Services.

In sum, there was no meaningful engagement with concerned and interested community members, and many community members still had unanswered questions about the mining ordinance when it returned to the Board of Supervisors on Oct 20.

CONCLUSION:

The public engagement that the BoS instructed Land Use Services staff to conduct did not happen. Concerned community members reached out directly to LUS but were not given the courtesy of a reply - much less actual engagement with the public to answer our many questions. The public was, once again, left out of the process of developing county policy that the public must then live with.