



# CITY OF BLYTHE

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September 2, 2022

The Honorable John M. Monterosso, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of Riverside  
4050 Main Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

Riverside County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 829  
Riverside, CA 92502

Riverside County Clerk-Recorder  
2720 Gateway Drive  
Riverside, CA 92507

**Re: City of Blythe Response to 2021-2022 Riverside County Grand Jury Report Entitled  
"City of Blythe is Dying"**

Dear Judge Monterosso:

The City of Blythe ("City") is in receipt of the 2021-2022 Riverside County Grand Jury Report entitled "City of Blythe is Dying" (the "Report"), provided to the City on June 7, 2022 and released to the public after the close of business on June 10, 2022.

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, enclosed is the City's response to each of the findings and recommendations included in the Report. The Blythe City Council approved the enclosed response on August 9, 2022.

The City of Blythe appreciates the opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury. Further, in accordance with California Penal Code Section 929, the Blythe City Council respectfully requests all of the evidentiary material, findings, and other information relied upon by, or presented to, the Grand Jury for its final report in its investigation of the City, as it is clear no information was obtained from the City to draw these conclusions.

Sincerely,

Dale Reynolds, Mayor

## **City of Blythe's Responses to Riverside County Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations**

### **Grand Jury Findings:**

- F1. Blythe's completely isolated location in the middle of a desert stifles its growth and makes it unattractive to new sources of badly needed investment.**

**City's Response:** The City partially agrees with this finding. The distance from Blythe and the rest of Riverside County is a challenge. County personnel and services are lacking in Blythe, as the County seems to forget Blythe is part of Riverside County. The many state laws, taxes and regulations also make it impossible for Blythe to compete as a border town, mere miles from the State of Arizona. The State's one-size-fits-all approach to governing has substantially hindered Blythe's growth and potential. State laws, such as California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction law (SB 1383) as an example, place unfunded mandates that are costly for small, rural communities like Blythe to comply with.

However, the City believes the focus of the Report should have been the unique position Blythe is in, being in the middle of everywhere. Caltrans estimates eleven million passenger vehicles travel through Blythe annually. The City is working on several projects to capture this market through development of the Colorado River, making Blythe the Gateway to California and providing amenities to travelers. Blythe is also within driving distance of four major metropolitan areas across three states. With an increase in online shopping, Blythe is in an excellent location to be a distribution hub for the Phoenix, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Los Angeles metro areas as well as the Coachella Valley. In addition, with the State of California's push for zero-emission vehicles, Blythe is the common sense stop for vehicle charging stations between Phoenix and the ports within the Los Angeles areas. With wide open spaces, Blythe has an opportunity to capture this new market as the State aims to have 100 percent of in-State sales of new passenger trucks and cars be zero-emission by 2035.

The City also believes the Report's finding should have referenced how Riverside County can better serve the residents of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley, an underserved community lacking the resources its other cities and communities are privileged to. Due to the distance between Blythe and the rest of eastern Riverside County, County services routinely stop at the "hill," so it takes longer and costs more for Blythe residents to access the services provided elsewhere in the County. For example, the County has considered closing the County-operated Animal Shelter that supports the City of Blythe as well as the Palo Verde Valley for several years. The City and County recently came to an agreement to transfer the shelter from the County to the City over the next three years. The City stepped up to save the shelter from closure, which would have resulted in animals being transported 100+ miles to the Coachella Valley in extreme temperatures. This is another example of how the City and its residents are overburdened with the cost of services that should be provided by the County and State. The Report also states the Grand Jury spoke to one County Supervisor. The City would like to hear what the Board of Supervisors' plan