

From: [Jacob Sandoval](#)
To: [Griffis, Amanda](#); [Lederer, Steven](#); [Ramirez, Alice](#); [Cottrell, Anne](#)
Cc: [Alyssa Mireles](#); [Nathan Castillo](#); [Geoff Ellsworth](#)
Subject: Public comment - Napa County UVWMA - Request for presentation time on Waste worker fatalities/impacts and waste site public safety/environmental impacts
Date: Monday, October 20, 2025 12:21:25 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-z3mqyswz.png](#)
[Resolution in Support Latino Waste Workers \(1\).pdf](#)

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Good morning board members,

The California League of United Latin American Citizens (CA LULAC), part of the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, works to advance the economic, educational, health, and environmental well-being of Latino communities across the state. CA LULAC advocates for policies that uphold environmental justice and workplace safety, especially for Latino and immigrant workers who are disproportionately represented in hazardous industries, including waste management, recycling, and emergency cleanup operations. This request is made with the full support of the California LULAC and National LULAC, which has formally endorsed this action through the attached National LULAC Resolution of Support.

Attachment: National LULAC Resolution of Support

Purpose of Request

This is a Request for an agenda item of 10-15 minutes for a presentation to the Upper Valley Waste Management Agency on the NEXUS between:

- California Latino Waste Worker fatalities/injuries/ impacts and associated Civil Rights complaints and environmental/water quality impacts, including related to Upper Valley Disposal Service/Clover Flat Landfill

- The recent Ca. Assembly/Senate Joint Audit and Hearing related to significant deficiencies/problems at Cal OSHA (see below)

- Waste site toxic exposures/ fire incidents impacting Ca. water resources, local environment and public safety relevant to Cal EPA, CalFire and local agencies.

The presentation will include considerations of impacts of toxic wildfire waste entering waste sites under emergency waivers.

This is a request for a 10 - 15 minute agenda item at the soonest available time.

I am included below the recent Ca. Assembly and Senate Cal OSHA Audit and Aug. 27 Hearing demonstrating grave failings in the Cal OSHA Process. The hearing starts at minute 46 of the recording.

Below is the Joint Audit Committee Hearing on the recent Cal OSHA audit, as well as a link to the audit itself and a summary.

(Waste Worker fatalities in Brisbane, San Leandro and Napa County have all occurred in the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board).

The Waste Worker Impact aspects of this situation have some additional considerations as many of the waste companies (including those where fatalities are occurring) operate off of

direct government contracts, and the stakes/dangers are elevated for both workers and the communities where these companies operate as the materials they handle can be highly toxic and prone to fire/explosion.

CAL OSHA AUDIT HEARING LINK

Starts at minute **46:30**

<https://www.assembly.ca.gov/media/joint-hearing-joint-legislative-audit-committee-and-assembly-labor-and-employment-committee-and-senate-labor-public-employment-and-retirement-committee-20250827>

2025 CAL OSHA AUDIT

<https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2024-115/>

Summary of the 2025 State Auditor's Report on Cal/OSHA (Report 2024-115)

The California State Auditor's July 2025 report found that Cal/OSHA's deficiencies in inspections, enforcement, and staffing compromise the safety of California's nearly 20 million workers.

Key Findings:

1. Failure to Inspect Some Complaints and Accidents

Cal/OSHA did not conduct on-site inspections for 9 of 30 worker complaints without valid justification. Even in cases where policy was followed, inspections might have offered better protection. In 6 of 7 uninspected accident cases, the agency failed to document why inspections weren't needed, including incidents involving serious injuries.

2. Weaknesses in Conducted Inspections

Inspections that were conducted often lacked adequate documentation. Employer safety programs (IIPPs) were poorly recorded, worker interview notes were incomplete or illegible, and some inspections missed legal deadlines by weeks or months. Several case files lacked sufficient evidence to support cited violations or confirm hazard abatement.

3. Problems with Enforcement and Fines

In 5 of 11 inspected complaints, Cal/OSHA did not verify that hazards were fully corrected. Fines were sometimes reduced without proper justification, and in at least one fatality case, penalties could have been nearly double. The Bureau of Investigations also failed to refer potentially prosecutable cases and did not consistently review serious non-fatal accidents.

4. Severe Staffing Shortages

A 32% vacancy rate in FY 2023–24 exceeding 40% in some enforcement units significantly limited Cal/OSHA's ability to perform timely, thorough inspections. Paper-based case files and outdated policies further undermined effectiveness and

consistency.

5. Key Recommendations

The audit recommended that Cal/OSHA strengthen documentation requirements, increase staffing and training, standardize evidence procedures, digitize its case management system by 2027, launch an online complaint portal by January 2027, expand proactive inspections in high-risk industries, and update internal policies every three years.

6. Supporting Data

Only 17% of valid complaints received on-site inspections in FY 2023–24. Vacancy-related budget savings totaled more than \$85 million between 2019 and 2024, with no clear reinvestment plan. Cal/OSHA’s proactive inspections made up just 22% of total inspections well below the national average of 42%.

7. Agency Response

The Department of Industrial Relations agreed with all recommendations, noting improvements in staffing (with vacancies reduced to 12% by May 2025), ongoing development of a digital case management system and online complaint portal, and acknowledgment that outdated policies and manual processes have long limited performance.

Thank you,

Jacob Sandoval

State Director, CA LULAC
Board Member, CA LULAC Foundation
Board Member, National LULAC
831-809-3503

[Calulacfoundation.org](https://calulacfoundation.org)

CALulac.org





League of United Latin American Citizens

Resolution In Support of Latino Waste Workers and Response to Fatalities and Workplace Hazards in the Waste Management Sector

WHEREAS the CA LULAC Napa Valley Waste Workers Advocacy Committee was formed to support Latino workers at Clover Flat Landfill/Upper Valley Disposal Service in Napa County, California, who have been exposed to hazardous working conditions including exposure to fires and unregulated radioactive material, and to seek justice following a Latino worker fatality at Upper Valley Disposal Service; and

WHEREAS Napa County is one of nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area of northern California, a region that has seen numerous recent workplace fatalities of Latino workers in the waste and recycling sector, as well countless Latino worker fatalities in other sectors, highlighting a regional crisis; and

WHEREAS these repeated fatalities and unsafe working conditions represent not only an immediate danger to Latino workers, their families and communities, but also indicate a broader pattern of systemic neglect, lack of oversight, and racial and economic inequities in the workplace; and

WHEREAS unsafe conditions for waste and landfill workers, especially those who are Latino and often immigrant, also pose broader environmental and public health risks to surrounding communities due to the mishandling of toxic waste, under-reported fires and large-scale contamination incidents, and inadequate worker protection protocols; and

WHEREAS the lives of essential waste workers—who provide critical services that ensure the health and safety of our communities—must be protected through stronger labor enforcement, regulatory accountability, and culturally and linguistically appropriate workplace standards;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. **LULAC National** recognizes the hazardous conditions facing Latino waste workers in the San Francisco Bay Area and Latino workers in the Northern California region as an urgent racial, environmental, and labor justice crisis.
2. **LULAC supports** the efforts of the CA LULAC Napa Valley Waste Workers Advocacy Committee and local LULAC councils to pursue justice for the deceased worker at Upper Valley Disposal Service and the deceased Latino workers from other waste companies and sectors and to advocate for comprehensive safety reforms.
3. **LULAC calls upon** local, state, and federal regulatory agencies—including Cal/OSHA, the Office of the California Labor Commission, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Labor—to conduct independent investigations and hearings into workplace safety, wage theft, and discriminatory practices in the waste and recycling sector, with special attention to the treatment of Latino and immigrant workers.

4. **LULAC urges** the creation of culturally competent safety standards, multilingual worker training, and whistleblower protections for all waste workers, particularly those in underregulated facilities such as landfills and transfer stations.
5. **LULAC demands** the expansion of funding for worker-led monitoring, community oversight, and rapid-response systems to ensure accountability and prevent further worker deaths.
6. **LULAC affirms** that environmental justice must include workplace justice, and that protecting waste workers and workers in all sectors from preventable harm is essential to the safety and sustainability of all communities.

SUBMITTED BY: Sacramento Lorenzo Patiño LULAC Council 2862, Maria Guterrez, President

**Voted and approved by the National Assembly of the 2025 LULAC National Convention
August 9, 2025**

**Roman Palomares
LULAC National President**