



The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin

The Central Third of California

June 13, 2023

Mayor Karen Goh and Members of the Bakersfield City Council
1501 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

RE: City of Bakersfield & Kern River

Dear Mayor Goh and City Council Members,

I write to you as a concerned citizen who is responsible for people which make up The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin, which includes the Central Valley, High Desert and High Sierra region. Our diocese recently did a Camino, which included a conversation with the local Sierra Club, Kern-Kaweah Chapter, and a 17 mile walk along the Kern River.

After a review of the detailed Sierra Club, Kern-Kaweah Chapter letter to the City of Bakersfield on February 6, 2023, The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin is requesting your assistance. We have been informed by the Sierra Club that there has been no response to the questions which were asked in this letter.

The issues reviewed and questions asked impact all residents of Greater Bakersfield, and therefore part of the diocese for which I am responsible. Some examples of their questions include:

- (1) low-income residents who have to pay their water bills, and yet, there are questions about whether the Kern River Golf Course is paying for its use of City water,
- (2) while in recent drought years City of Bakersfield residents were required to practice water conservation measures, there was a question of whether the City is requiring the same of City water used by Kern County, and
- (3) common-sense collaboration between City Departments for a habitat protection and restoration plan in the secondary flood plain.

City practices that would give confidence to all residents that they are receiving equitable access to water for personal use as well as to City of Bakersfield public parks and lands set aside for public use (including the Kern River Parkway) are needed.

As such, this request is that the City of Bakersfield respond to each question in the February 6, 2023 letter. We would add that we are not party to any legal action involving any of these issues.

Answers would be helpful to The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin as well as the public at large.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. David C. Rice
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin



SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BAKERSFIELD
2216 17th Street, Bakersfield, California 93301

June 18, 2023

Councilman Andrae Gonzales
1600 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Councilman Gonzales,

It was lovely walking with you through the Oleander neighborhood last week. Thank you for taking time to do that, and for all you do for our area. At the moment, I am writing you on behalf of my parishioners at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and requesting your assistance. Upon review of the detailed Sierra Club, Kern-Kaweah Chapter letter to the City of Bakersfield dated February 6, 2023, we have been informed by the Sierra Club that there has to date been no response by the Bakersfield City Council to the questions which were asked in this letter.

The issues reviewed and questions asked impact all residents of Greater Bakersfield, including our parishioners and the surrounding community we serve. Some examples:

- (1) Low-income residents who must pay their water bills, yet there are questions about whether the Kern River Golf Course is paying for its use of City water.
- (2) While in recent drought years City of Bakersfield residents are were required to practice water conservation measures, there is a question of whether the city is requiring the same of city water used by Kern County.
- (3) Common-sense collaboration between city departments for a habitat protection and restoration plan in the secondary flood plain.

City practices that would give confidence to all residents that they are receiving equitable access to water for personal use, as well as to City of Bakersfield public parks and lands set aside for public use (including the Kern River Parkway) are needed. As such, this request is that the City of Bakersfield respond to each question in the February 6, 2023, letter.

We would add that we are not party to any legal action involving any of these issues.

Answers will be helpful to move forward with constructive dialog, which will benefit St. Paul's parishioners and the public at large.

Sincerely,

The Rev'd Luis M. Rodriguez, MA, MTh,
Priest-in-Charge, St. Paul's Episcopal Church