



PALMDALE
a place to call home

JAMES C. LUDWIG, Jr.
Mayor

STEPHEN KNIGHT
Mayor Pro Tem

MIKE DISPENZA
Councilmember

STEVEN D. BOHANNON
Councilmember

TOMMY L. LEE
Councilmember

September 30, 2008

Dr. Jackie Fisher, Sr.
President, Antelope Valley College
3041 West Avenue K
Lancaster, CA 93536

Dear Dr. Fisher:

Thank you for updating Councilmember Dispenza and me on the Measure R progress and the development of a Palmdale campus.

While we appreciate your time and efforts in providing us with the status of the Palmdale campus, we are deeply disappointed with the Antelope Valley College Board of Trustees' lack of attention and commitment to appropriately fund the Palmdale campus as specified in the bond measure.

The City of Palmdale has been expecting the Antelope Valley College District to spend \$52 million of Measure R and state matching funds to **“provide permanent classrooms, labs, job training and college transfer counseling buildings facilities in the Palmdale area, including the acquisition of a site(s) to allow local students greater access to an affordable education”** as stated clearly in the Measure R Ballot Text (See Attachment I – Measure R Full Text, page B-3). Yet, the City was informed by the District that after spending approximately \$5 million to acquire a site for the Palmdale campus, there is no more money left for the construction of the Palmdale campus since all of the \$139 million bond money has been allocated and appropriated to other projects such as the proposed Theatre Arts Facility.

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When you approached the Palmdale City Council in 2004 seeking our support for this bond measure, we were informed that **“over \$52 million will be spent on establishing, constructing and opening the first phase of the Palmdale campus, which will serve at least 3,000 full time students”** (See Attachment II – Staff Report dated September 13, 2004). Based on this commitment, the City Council adopted a resolution **“to fully support the Antelope Valley Community College District bond measure on the November 2, 2004 ballot and encourage all voting citizens to vote ‘Yes’ for the \$139 million facilities construction bond, which will ultimately benefit all citizens in the City of Palmdale with our own community college campus”** (See Attachment III – Resolution No. CC 2004-247 dated September 13, 2004).

At the July 26, 2004 Palmdale City Council meeting, you presented arguments for supporting Measure R. Once again, your presentation to the City Council included the Palmdale campus plan, estimated at \$52 million, to accommodate 10,000 students when completed (Attachment IV – Excerpts from AVC Presentation to the City Council).

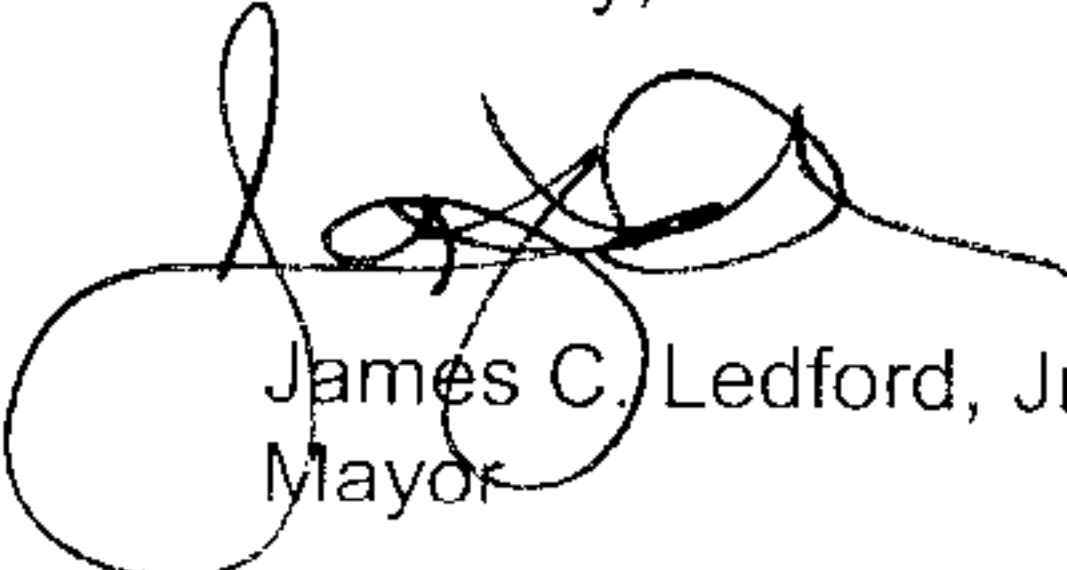
Moreover, the ballot survey conducted by EMC for the District showed that 59% of the likely voters support a new South Valley Palmdale campus, significantly higher than the amount of support received for the Theatre, which placed last at 50% (See Attachment V – Survey Results of AVC District Likely March 04 Voters by EMC, page 16-17). The survey concluded that “upgrading facilities outside of those for basic education needs are less popular” with the voters. The same survey showed that 68% of voters in Palmdale and 75% in Littlerock support a new South Valley Palmdale campus. It is apparent that voters in Palmdale and Littlerock’s overwhelming support for a campus in Palmdale played a significant role in getting Measure R the 55% required voter threshold for a community college district general obligation bond. We have come to the realization that “bait-and-switch” tactics were used to sell Measure R to the South Valley community with very little effort to make good on the campaign promises. The Measure R Committee in 2004 also ran an appealing and successful campaign, promising the likely voters in Palmdale and South Valley communities “our own Palmdale campus”. A Palmdale campus was the biggest item that the District sold to the residents of the South Valley community on the Measure R ballot and it is vitally important that the District fulfills its promise to this community.

We are appalled that there is no money left in Measure R funds for the development of the Palmdale campus, and further outraged by your comments that “another bond” would be floated to pay for the Palmdale campus. As shown in the EMC survey, there is little support by the likely voters in communities such as Lancaster and Rosamond to pay for a new campus in the South Valley. It would also be difficult for the District to get the required support from the residents of Palmdale, whom you promised a campus four (4) years ago, as the District’s credibility with our community has been severely weakened by the broken promises and bait-and-switch tactics.

During the City Council briefings in 2004, you shared the project cost breakdown with us, outlining the \$52 million for Off-Site Development, On-Site Development, and Initial Facilities for Palmdale Campus, with \$16.4 million coming from Measure R and \$35.6 million from the state (See Attachment VI – Proposed Project Listing for AVCCD dated 11/10/03). Since \$16.4 million from Measure R should have been committed to Palmdale campus, and only \$5 million has been spent, we are extremely concerned about the remaining \$11.4 million of Measure R money that was supposed to be dedicated to fund the Palmdale campus.

The Palmdale City Council and its constituents supported the District’s ballot measure based on your representation that of the \$368 million in facilities construction funds (\$139 million in bond money and \$229 million in state funds), over \$52 million would be spent on the Palmdale campus. Councilmember Dispenza and I feel very misled and deceived that after all your promises and pledges to the Palmdale City Council and the community, there is no firm monetary commitment to the development of the Palmdale campus. We are extremely disappointed and discouraged by the District’s dishonesty and lack of commitment. There’s an obvious lack of fiscal responsibility and accountability in the management of the bond funds. We are appalled and outraged by the Antelope Valley College District’s focus on pursuing ancillary facilities rather than addressing overcrowding and educational, classroom facilities.

Sincerely,



James C. Ledford, Jr.
Mayor