



# No New Jail in Lancaster:

# Testimonies from People Imprisoned at Lancaster State Prison

## “That money needs to be spent in my community!”

The County of Los Angeles is currently seeking to build a new women’s jail in Lancaster (Mira Loma) as part of a \$3.7 billion plan for jail construction. We believe that this \$3.7 billion would be better invested in resources for the communities in Los Angeles most impacted by policing and imprisonment, primarily poor Black and Brown communities.

**Critical Resistance stands firmly against this and all jail construction as an organization that is working to abolish the use of imprisonment and policing. We believe that all jails and prisons are toxic to the health and wellbeing of those caged within them as well as the people and the environments surrounding them.**

One aspect of our campaign to stop construction of the Mira Loma women’s jail is to fight the jail on environmental grounds, citing issues with its construction and operation in the areas of water supply and quality, air quality, and hazardous waste.

We solicited testimony and analysis from subscribers to *The Abolitionist* who are currently imprisoned in the Lancaster area because we are gravely concerned over the risks of Valley Fever in that area, including for those who would be imprisoned in the proposed new jail. To protect against potential retaliation, we have only included the first names of respondents.

[www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)



**PACK THE LA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 10AM, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11 500 WEST TEMPLE**  
THIS IS THE LAST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE \$120 MILLION WOMEN'S JAIL BEING PROPOSED IN LANCASTER. IT'S ENVIRONMENTALLY, RACIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY TOXIC.  
**WE ARE NOT DISPOSABLE!**

This jail is environmentally, racially, and economically toxic. **We need everyone out on October 11th to pack the LA County Board of Supervisors’ chambers and let them know we won’t tolerate new jail construction! Spread the word.**

**Tuesday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 11am**  
500 W Temple St  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

## Have you or other contacts of yours imprisoned at California State Prison Lancaster (CSP-LAC) contracted Valley Fever while at the Prison?

population here. Including myself, sinus infections occur regularly. This is a wind prone area, whenever the winds blow excessively or change directions from the mean path (opposite direction) an increased number of inmates "get sick" with flu like symptoms and/or sinus infections.

The dust raised by these winds is thick and causes skin irritation if not washed off.

**Robert:** While I myself have never contracted Valley Fever since being here, I do personally know three people (two African Americans and one Caucasian) who have contracted it here.

**Tyrone:** Yes. I contracted Valley Fever while at CSP-LAC 2008-2015. I believe I wouldn't have contracted Valley Fever (if not imprisoned).

**Samuel:** I have been here at CSP-LAC for the past 9 years and have seen a few cases of Valley Fever, although I do not know how many cases have been "diagnosed" here. It does seem that there are an unusually high number of breathing related health issues among the prison

Join the jail fight, contact:  
**Critical Resistance Los Angeles**  
[crla@criticalresistance.org](mailto:crla@criticalresistance.org)  
 visit [www.lanomorejails.org](http://www.lanomorejails.org)  
 for more info

## How has Valley Fever impacted your health, wellbeing, and survival (or that of your contact) either inside or outside of the prison?

**Ruben:** The two person who I briefly interviewed, their health and wellbeing was greatly impacted by their contraction of Valley Fever. The same one who did all the talking lifted up his shirt to show me a long long scar from an operation where he said that one of his lungs had to be removed due to his contraction of Valley Fever.

**Robert:** All three of the people I know, were severely impacted by Valley Fever and had to take the full course of medication for an extended time. Each person's physical health deteriorated to the point of being life-threatening before the recovery finally set in. One guy was outfitted with a shunt to his head in order to drain our swelled excess; another guy was hospitalized; and the third guy was placed on the harshest medication available as a last-ditch effort because all the other medications previously tried on him had failed.

**Tyrone:** Required to take medication, constant blood tests, and worry of disease by the Valley Fever weakening my immune system.

**Do you believe you (or your contact) would have contracted Valley Fever if not imprisoned? Do you believe you (or your contact) would have been able to better heal outside of the conditions of imprisonment? Why?**

**Samuel:** For the majority of reasons, I do honestly and firmly think and believe that a great many individuals would be in better general health if not confined to prison period. However, it is a very sad statement to have to admit that there are some prisoners who would not receive any health care whatsoever outside of the prison environment.

**Robert:** I don't believe the people I know would've contracted Valley Fever if not imprisoned, because they wouldn't have been subjected to continual exposure to a documented high-risk area. It's no coincidence that all three contracted Valley Fever within three months of each other, most likely due to the same rash of spores that burst through at the time. I do believe that the three would've healed much better if not imprisoned, because they would've had access to better medical care. All three were initially misdiagnosed by incompetent medical staff who wrongly argued that their symptoms belonged to supposed maladies ranging from HIV to substance abuse. By the time someone in medical got it right, the condition of all three had substantially worsened. Had the three been on the outside,



they most likely would've been properly diagnosed sooner, as they wouldn't have been subjected to the pervasive apathy and constant suspicions of malingering that too often characterize doctors here.

**Corey:** No, I don't think no prisoners would have contracted Valley Fever if not imprisoned and if so they would heal better out of prison because they would have better medical treatment in the free world.

**Tyrone:** I believe I wouldn't have contracted Valley Fever. I don't know about the healing/treatment because I have nothing to compare it with.



**VALLEY FEVER**  
"COCCI" / COCCIDIOIDOMYCOSIS

FUNGAL DISEASE SPREAD THROUGH PORES IN AIR

RESIDES IN THE SOIL OF THE SOUTHWEST U.S.

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE: TIREDNESS, FEVER, COUGH, HEADACHES, RASH, MUSCLE & JOINT PAIN, AND SKIN LESIONS

COMMON CAUSE OF PNEUMONIA

INFECTION MAY RECUR OR BECOME CHRONIC

IS WIDESPREAD WHERE LA COUNTY WANTS TO BUILD A WOMEN'S JAIL

#STOPTOXICJAIL



**Based on your experience and knowledge, do you think that building a new jail in the Lancaster area will be detrimental to the health of imprisoned people and people in the community surrounding the proposed jail site?**

**Ruben:** Based on my experience and knowledge I believe that building a new jail in the Lancaster area will be detrimental to the health of imprisoned people and people in the community surrounding the proposed jail site because Valley Fever which is well known to be in this area will gravely affect those who come in contact with it. Rain stimulates the growth of fungus in the soil and when things dry out there is more spores in the air which increases the infection rate. More people will be susceptible to Valley Fever especially if a new jail is built in the Lancaster area.

**Robert:** It's already known and documented that the Lancaster area is a site of Valley Fever spores. Building a new jail would require the kind of deep-digging construction that unleashes Valley Fever spores from within the ground. **Unleashed spores would then endanger first the residents of the community around the proposed jail site, then the to-be imprisoned women once the jail is built, and finally, the current prisoners of the existing state prison in Lancaster, should another wave of spores blow this way.**

**Samuel:** Based on my personal knowledge and experience the so called building of a "new" jail/prison is never a good idea because once built it would have to fill or fail, so the filling of the new facility would come about by **WHATEVER** means to simply justify the expense.

**Corey:** Yes because jails are not the answer to anything.

**Tyrone:** Yes. Because Valley Fever and other diseases can spread to staff (norovirus 2009-2010) and to the public.

**Why are you opposed to construction of a new women's jail?**

**Kelsey:** I am definitely opposed to a new women's jail in Lancaster because of several reasons. The women in the community of Lancaster are going to be subjected to being placed in jail for things they would normally receive a ticket for, or probation is going to turn into county jail time! It's no different than when they built all these prisons they came up with a way to imprison more people to fill them up by changing laws "Three Strikes Law" and others which will continue to destroy families.

**T.:** That money needs to be spent in my community!

**Tyrone:** The US already imprisons too many versus treatment.

## **Ruben: I am opposed to construction of a new women's jail because California is already the prison/jail capital of the nation. Building new jails is not the answer.**

**Robert:** Besides the obvious, very real Valley Fever risks, a new women's jail would only serve as a pernicious vehicle to shuttle even more poor women into the maw of the prison industrial complex and away from the suffering communities that desperately need them. Whatever excuses are being offered by proponents of the new jail, we must not be fooled by the lies of the PIC, for this is just the latest egregious example of how savings from Prop 47 are being wasted on the shell game that is "realignment" as the state tries to cling to its carceral head count by shifting more incarcerated people to the county jails. In this case, women will be the latest casualties of the PIC's human chattel grab.

**Samuel:** There is already a facility in place at Mira Loma that has been closed since I have been at CSP-LAC (9 years) or longer. My question would be: why was the facility at Mira Loma closed? And why are they talking about building a "new" jail there? (It is a) Hazardous materials site – the soil is dead! Nothing lives in the soil, no worms, insects, or other living creatures like that. When it rains a film covers the puddles, when the puddles dry a alkali like crust is left behind to blow in the winds. Broken bits of glass and other debris come to the surface. Nothing much beyond grass and weeds will grow in the dirt with a great deal of added help. To dig a garden plot is to discover and uncover trash and debris left behind from previous construction and who knows what?

**Byron:** (I am opposed because of) environmental issues with ground soils in relation to Valley Fever spores and health harm to the human body.

**Instead of building a new jail, what resources would you rather see money being used for?**

**Robert:** Money should be used for re-entry programs that will help people reintegrate into their communities once outside. Such programs should be pre-release – such as education and vocation and substance/healing classes – and also post-release such as job training and employment search assistance. Ultimately we as a society must be vigilant in ensuring that public resources are truly being used to help deny

the PIC its human fodder, rather than to build more giant cages that merely expand the belly of the beast.

**Ruben:** Instead of building a new jail I would rather see money being used for more rehabilitational programs and educational programs for our children.

**Kelsey:** Community youth centers, counselors for troubled youth and adults, create more jobs in the community, more affordable housing, improve family visit unit for inmates to enjoy quality time with their family in a healthy environment since the state claims they don't have no money to make the improvements. They can also build more (family visit units)!

**Tyrone:** An array of treatment options for offenders, education mandatory, ie. high school diploma or GED and an AA, plus completion of substance abuse program and anger management.

**Byron:** After school community youth activity and educational style programs with computer and internet services, and recreational parks for the kinds including basketball gym, swimming pool, and football field area facilities.

**Samuel:** The resources would be better spent on cleaning up the mess that is already in place, and on education to prevent such issues from becoming problems while funding toward rehabilitation is also needed more than the opening of yet another **HUMAN WAREHOUSE**.

*Whatever excuses are being offered by proponents of the new jail, we must not be fooled by the lies of the PIC, for this is just the latest egregious example of how savings from Prop 47 are being wasted on the shell game that is "realignment" as the state tries to cling to its carceral head count by shifting more incarcerated people to the county jails.*

*In this case, women will be the latest casualties of the PIC's human chattel grab.*

*— Robert  
(currently imprisoned at California State Prison - Lancaster)*

**Javier:** I am opposed to a new jail because it's not helping to make a better world...

**Homelessness, children's services, education, mental health, environmental preservation (should be invested in) to name a few, but the list would be extensive if I went on...**

### Mobilize on October 11: Stop the Toxic Jail

This jail is environmentally, racially, and economically toxic. We need everyone out on October 11th to pack the LA County Board of Supervisors' chambers and let them know we won't tolerate new jail construction! Spread the word.

**Tuesday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 11am**

500 W Temple St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Contact [crla@criticalresistance.org](mailto:crla@criticalresistance.org) for more information.

