

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 18, 2018
UPDATED: July 31, 2018
CONTACT: Valerie Gorospe, (661) 303-1032, vgorospe@crpe-ej.org

HUGE WIN FOR ARVIN!! Arvin City Council Unanimously Votes to Protect Its Citizens and Regulate Oil and Gas

ARVIN, CA -- Last night, the Arvin City Council voted unanimously to approve an update to their [city's oil and gas ordinance](#) "to protect the health, safety, public welfare, physical environment and natural resources of the City of Arvin, and to prevent nuisances, by the reasonable regulation of certain petroleum operations." These changes serve as a complete update to the ordinance, which hasn't happened since 1965, even though Arvin's population has quadrupled in size. This historic victory happened in spite of aggressive pushback from the oil & gas industry, concerned about the precedent this ordinance would set.

"It was a five year campaign and we used every strategy we knew: community organizing, legal advocacy, coalition building, communications and 501c4 electoral" said Caroline Farrell, Executive Director of the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE). "For a small city in Kern County, the 3rd largest oil producing county in the country, to stand up and regulate the industry without the industry's blessing was a real threat to them. The community turned out, spoke up and the decision-makers were brave enough to challenge the industry's rhetoric with facts."

This victory is a turning point for communities, who want to protect their health from the negative impacts of deregulated oil and gas industry activity in their towns. What makes this victory particularly special is the extraordinary roles that community members, young advocates, and public servants played in passing these measures. Committee for a Better Arvin lead the work of countless community members. Committee president Estela Escoto highlighted their work, "We live in a community that for many years has been one of the most polluted. This ordinance is the result of many years of fight and sacrifice. The ordinance is a great victory for us, but we will continue fighting for more until we achieve a better air quality for all the residents of our community."

With the voting councilmembers all under the age of 30, it demonstrated that the vital role that young people are playing in helping to shape their futures in sustainable and environmentally sound ways. CRPE youth leaders, many of whom are high school students, also played a key role by canvassing local neighborhoods, attending hearings, and sharing information about the importance of the updated ordinance.

"The political atmosphere at a national level is so demoralizing for our communities, which is why it is so important to celebrate this success. We can have hope in the face of deep challenges. Arvin community members were able to exert their political power, and win. While 300 foot buffer zones are not big enough, they are very [significant for Kern County](#). It will take local victories like this one to move us away from extractive oil & gas practices" said Juan Flores, Community Organizer at CRPE.

CRPE is excited to continue to work with CBA on a Just Transition towards renewable energy with Arvin Mayor Jose Gurrola.

.....

The Center on Race, Poverty, & the Environment (CRPE) is a national environmental justice organization providing legal, organizing, and technical assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color. Follow us on [twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

Committee for a Better Arvin (CBA) is a nonprofit organization whose members reside in Arvin, CA. CBA's mission is to improve the quality of life in Arvin, to inform and unite the community, to address problems facing the community, and to secure equality for all residents. CBA and its members have engaged in advocacy for improved local and regional air quality for many years and are concerned about the impacts of increased oil and gas development in the San Joaquin Valley. Follow CBA on [Facebook](#).