

Stand Against Project Jupiter's Violence:
Reframing the arrests that took place on July 28th, 2026

Stop Project Jupiter

For months, local organizers have shown up to Doña Ana County Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) meetings and engaged in public comment calling for transparency surrounding Project Jupiter's hasty and secretive development, and for months our concerns have fallen on deaf ears. On Tuesday, July 28th, the Doña Ana County Commission once again silenced our voices, this time by wielding unnecessary violence against two community members who were outspoken about the unannounced public comment changes. This escalation of violence is a manifestation of Project Jupiter's overarching violence in our community, and the Doña Ana County Commissioners' inability to protect us from it. We call for immediate accountability. The private security guard who enacted violence, Greg Maddox, must be terminated from his position and charged with battery. Commissioner Sanchez must resign from his position as commissioner, he did not act as a public servant.

On Tuesday, July 28th, a few county officials and Project Jupiter developers orchestrated the silencing of public opposition. Workers from the project site were bused to the Doña Ana County Government Center that morning and permitted to enter at 7:45 a.m., to sign up for public comment. They were paid by Project Jupiter developers to attend the meeting. Once the meeting started, Commission Chair Sanchez announced the decision to cap public comment at thirty individuals, on a first come first serve basis, and that the time limit for each person to speak would be reduced from three to two minutes. There was no public announcement or notification of this rule change prior to the meeting. Yet, Project Jupiter supporters were aware of the new two-minute time limit and that only the first thirty individuals who signed up for public comment would be allowed to speak.

On June 9, 2026, the BOCC informed the public that playing voice recordings during public comment would no longer be allowed, based on county code. In response to this, we organized a group of residents who live a 50-minute drive from Las Cruces to attend and deliver their comments in person that morning because these communities have faced excessive barriers to public comment. These residents from Sunland Park and Santa Teresa, however, were prohibited from making public comments. Those who wanted to address the unions and workers, were not allowed to make their comment. This sudden change to the public comment structure once again affirmed that the county and companies have systematically failed in incorporating the input of those who will be most impacted by the negative consequences of this project.

When Chair Sanchez ended the public comment portion of the meeting, a group of us stood together and began chanting, "Let us speak! Let us speak!" The events that followed were due to County leaders, their private security guards, and law enforcement inciting violent force to quell the verbal opposition. It is the job of authorities to deescalate, yet the opposite happened. First, one person was handcuffed and arrested for chanting. Then, a different community member was thrown to the ground twice in the commission chambers. and in the lobby, where her face was pushed and held against the tile floor until

she started to bleed. Others were held in handcuffs, but later released and received citations. Being arrested and thrown to the floor for wanting to participate in a public, democratic meeting is unjustified.

We believe the changes to the public comment structure and the excessive use of force that followed show that Commissioners want to prevent our successful advocacy at these BOCC meetings; this is not an isolated incident. Since September 19th, 2025, we have shown up bi-monthly at 9am during the work week to ask for information, answers, and opportunities for earnest discourse with Doña Ana County government about Project Jupiter. We called for an in-person community meeting between the county and constituents, which developers turned into job fair. We built statewide momentum and gathered thousands of comments in collaboration with other organizations for the original natural gas-powered air quality permit application comments. In response to our grassroots outreach, the company rolled out a massive statewide ad, social media, and canvassing campaign to shift public opinion and manufacture public consent. We called for the termination of Scott Andrews, the county manager who introduced Project Jupiter and signed NDAs with developers, and Andrews was recently terminated. Our advocacy has successfully shifted Project Jupiter developers' actions. Without our voices, Project Jupiter developers would likely not have presented in-person on Tuesday, July 28th at the BOCC meeting. We have forced Project Jupiter developers to slow down the steamrolling of our community.

Instead of county officials taking the time to listen to their constituents to make room for our voices, on July 28th they attempted to reframe that narrative and manufacture public approval. Only five individuals were permitted to speak against Project Jupiter. Commission Chair Sanchez could have allowed all individuals present that day to provide public input, but he did not. Instead, he appeared to prioritize voices from Albuquerque and Juárez, not constituents of Doña Ana County. While he has the legal authority to change the rules of public comment without notice, his actions are antidemocratic and unethical.

We are peaceful individuals that view non-violent, civil disobedience as our civic responsibility when our public systems breed injustice. Because Commission Chair Manuel Sanchez allowed violent escalation to happen on July 28th, we call for him to resign from the commission. We also call for the security guard who initiated violence, Greg Maddox, to be immediately terminated and held accountable for his actions.

We call on the greater Doña Ana County community to stand with us against this abuse. To stand against Project Jupiter's violence to our bodies, our land, our water, our air, and our future. So long as billionaires continue to divide our community with the aid of complicit politicians, we will stand up.

Our voices have held power, and on this past Tuesday, our voices were stripped from us.

Sincerely,
Stop Project Jupiter