

# Santa Barbara County Cattlemens' Association

*"Stewards of the Range"*

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August 30, 2008

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Hon. Salud Carbajal, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Re: Fire Code Adoption**



Dear Chair Carbajal and Honorable Supervisors:

The Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association is writing to urge the consideration of the Board to reinstate administrative appeals to the Board of Supervisors as the final hearing body for the following reasons:

- The County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) unanimously supported this recommendation.
- Forcing a rancher/farmer/rural property owner to use the court system to address grievances is inherently unfair because 1) a small operator would be unlikely to have the financial resources for litigation; and, 2) a court would be unlikely to overturn a decision of a fire department because a judge would not consider himself/herself enough of an expert in this arena.
- The Board is in the best position to give appropriate weight to various considerations in deciding an administrative appeal. The Fire Board of Appeal may be inclined (due to background and experience) to give too little weight to considerations other than fire safety. Only the Board of Supervisors can balance public safety along with factors of environmental protection and severe economic hardship.
- All other major land use permitting decisions are appealable to the Board of Supervisors.
- The County's elected leaders should have ultimate authority over decisions that could result in County liability and impacts to the County treasury.

In the several meetings with Fire Department officials conducted with the AAC and its members, including our Cattlemen's Association representatives, the Fire Department personnel never expressed an objection, or any strong feelings one way or another on the concept of restoring the Board of Supervisors as an appeal body. Moreover, an appeal pertaining to an interpretation of the Fire Code could have a dramatic impact on our agricultural operations when our industry is already under intense financial pressure,

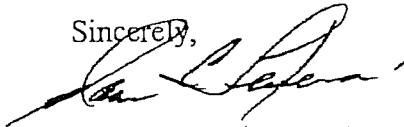


trying to operate in a world market where our competitors get to operate with distinct advantages of fewer regulations and far fewer costs.

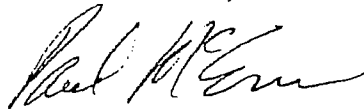
The AAC spent many hours in reviewing the new Code, discussing its contents and their impacts on agriculture, and, meeting with Department representatives. Ultimately, they came up with a set of recommendations that carefully balance the needs of public safety and the needs of agriculture.

The ability to appeal policy matters of this kind to the Board of Supervisors is a cornerstone of those recommendations and we ask that you support this request.

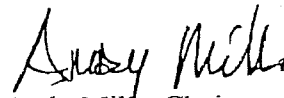
Sincerely,



Marvin Teixeira, President



Paul McEnroe, Vice President



Andy Mills, Chair  
Land Use Committee

