

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** 6/19/03  
**Department Name:** Planning & Development  
**Department No.:** 053  
**Agenda Date:** 7/1/03  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimate Time:** 30 minutes  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Valentin Alexeeff, Director  
Planning and Development

**STAFF CONTACT:** Dave Ward, Supervising Planner, Comprehensive Planning Division (x2072)

**SUBJECT:** Board Comment Letter on the National Park Service Draft Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study

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## Recommendation(s)

That the Board of Supervisors review and authorize the Chair to sign a comment letter to the National Park Service on the *Draft Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study*.

## Alignment with Board Strategic Plan

The recommendation is consistent with our organizational values regarding collaboration and partnering and the following adopted Strategic Goals:

- Goal #4: A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable,
- Goal #5: A High Quality of Life for All Residents

## Executive Summary and Discussion

In 1999, Congress authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to study the feasibility of including all or a portion of the Gaviota Coast in the national park system. The NPS established a 76-mile study area that extends from Coal Oil Point in Goleta westward past Point Conception, and northward to Point Sal, including Vandenberg Air Force Base. The *Draft Feasibility Study* was prepared by the NPS to determine if the study area is suitable and feasible for designation as a unit of the national park system.

The NPS determined that the study area's natural and cultural resources are nationally significant and suitable for inclusion in the national park system, however the area is not a feasible addition due to insufficient land available from willing sellers and strong opposition currently exists from area landowners. The NPS also recommended the following land conservation efforts that could be managed by property owners, conservation organizations, or state and local agencies: continuation of current programs and policies or enhanced local and state management. Since neither recommendation involves NPS management, these are only options for consideration and there is no authority or mandate to implement.

Staff has prepared a draft comment letter acknowledging the detailed document prepared by the NPS and their conclusion that the Gaviota coast is a remarkable region of biological, agricultural, cultural and scenic significance. The comment letter also identifies the current effort by the County to support locally driven land conservation efforts proposed by several workgroups in the community.

At the public hearing, the Board can accept the letter or direct staff to make any necessary revisions to finalize the letter. The Board's comment letter must be submitted to the NPS by July 18, 2003.

**Mandates and Service Levels:**

None

**Consistency with the Five-Year Work Program:**

P&D coordination with community groups on local conservation efforts and review and comment on the NPS Draft Feasibility Study are included in Comprehensive Planning's five-year work program.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Staff costs associated with review of the NPS report and this hearing are included in P&D's FY 02/03 and 03/04 budget.

**Concurrence:**

N/A

**Special Instructions:**

Mail and distribute signed comment letter

**Attachment:** Comment Letter

July 1, 2003

Martha Crusius  
National Park Service  
Planning and Partnerships – Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study  
1111 Jackson Street, No.700  
Oakland, CA 94702

RE: Public Comment on the Draft Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study

Dear Ms. Crusius:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study*. The National Park Service (NPS) prepared a detailed analysis of the Gaviota Coast resources, documenting many of the natural and cultural resources that are assets to Santa Barbara County.

The County concurs with your agency's conclusion that the Gaviota coast is a remarkable region of biological, agricultural, cultural and scenic significance. While the *Draft Feasibility Study* identified the infeasibility for the area to be added to the national park system and any management by the NPS, the study did recommend consideration of land conservation efforts that could be managed by property owners, conservation organizations, or state and local agencies. The *Draft Feasibility Study* conclusion supports the current focus by the County for conservation at the local level.

In fact, during the last few years, several workgroups consisting of area landowners, community groups and conservation organizations have been building a coalition of support for locally driven conservation efforts. These groups have communicated recently that their conservation proposals are anticipated for public review in the upcoming year. At that time, it is expected additional dialog with the community, appropriate county departments and the Board will provide an opportunity to consider the merits of the proposals and local actions for potential implementation. The County will update the NPS on the progress of our local conservation efforts in the future.

Sincerely,

Naomi Schwartz, Chair  
Board of Supervisors

cc: Valentin Alexeeff, Planning & Development Director  
Dave Ward, Comprehensive Planning  
Gaviota Project file