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Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

From: Jeffrey Pemstein <jpemstein@nahb.org>
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2026 9:04 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Jocelyn Brennan; Executive Director; Dan Dunmoyer; Michael@Md3inv.com; Thomas Ward; Karl Eckhart
Subject: Comment Letter for April 7 2026 Agenda Item #26-00294
Attachments: HPSCAN_20260406155133543_2026-04-06_155235838.pdf

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Good morning:

Attached, please find our comment letter for Agenda Item 26-00295 on the April 7, 2026 Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Agenda regarding the Richards Ranch project.

If you would please confirm receipt, distribute to the Chair and Members of the Board, and include in the formal record.

Thanks you in advance.



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We Build Communities

NAHB will host Pro+Connect, July 13 – 15, at the National Housing Center. Pro+Connect brings builder executives together with national product manufacturers and suppliers for focused one-on-one meetings and networking. Learn more at proconnectmatch.com.

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| State and Local Government Affairs Department

April 2, 2026

Supervisor Bob Nelson, Chair
and Member of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Submitted via Email Only

Subject: Agenda Item File #26-00294
April 7, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting
Hearing for the Richards Ranch Project (Key Site 26)

Dear Chair Nelson and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Request

In partnership with the members of the Home Builders Association of the Central Coast (HBACC) and our builder members, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) supports the request by Richards Ranch (Project Applicant) to accept the Property Exchange Agreement (Tax Transfer Agreement) and corresponding findings of the arbitrator, and advance the project to the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO) for consideration of annexation to the City of Santa Maria.

This request is consistent with our formal written comments on behalf of the Project Applicant (dated April 4, 2025). At that time, we noted the efforts to thwart this in-fill and needed project were and are egregious at a time of a severe housing shortage within the County, State and Nationally. Now to hold up the Tax Exchange agreement is yet another misguided attempt to forestall what is universally the issue of our day: **Providing adequate and safe housing for all our communities throughout the country.**

As the primary national trade association dedicated to housing, we urge the members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to advance the Richards Ranch forward to LAFCO. Further, we offer our assistance in resolving any remaining or unresolved matters between the County and the Applicant.

Background

Richards Ranch Mixed-Use Development (Orcutt Commons- Project) is a 750-unit residential community, including 156 deed-restricted affordable units, on a 44-acre infill site. The site has been

commercially zoned since the 1980s and remains undeveloped due to infrastructure constraints (primarily lacking water allocations for commercial use, but with sufficient capacity for residential purposes). With public infrastructure now surrounding the property, a clear path forward exists to annex the project into the City of Santa Maria which has adequate capacity to serve the development.

Stalling the Project once again is wasteful and only serves to create an island of underutilized and undevelopable land. Further, the loss of tax revenues and funding for local schools combined with the price escalation pressure brought about by continuing delays only further exacerbates the price of housing and rents. Shelter inflation and housing insecurity are why projects like Richards Ranch are so badly needed. Especially in high-cost communities like the California Central Coast.

Without Projects like Richards Ranch, where else are future schoolteachers, firefighters, law enforcement, and healthcare workers supposed to live and serve the local community. Additionally, how are employers supposed to retain or attract employees if new and attainable housing projects are stalled indefinitely.

Richards Ranch is truly an in-fill development whose time is ready for the proposed development of homes and neighborhood serving support services. The next and appropriate step is to forward this application to the Santa Barbara County LAFCO

NAHB's current estimates are that over 88.2 million households—65% of all U.S. households—are already not able to afford a median priced new home. Our models further indicate that governmental delays in application processing are one of the key factors leading to the chronic shortage of housing. Such delays in project review and approvals are increasingly pricing families out of housing at all levels. For every \$1,000 increase in the median price of a new home would price an additional 156,000 households out of the market.

For the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara Metropolitan area the average price of a new home is over \$860,750 (existing homes at \$1.289 million) with over 80% of the homebuying population priced out of the market. From a housing cost burden perspective, between 30% and 50% of the Region exceed the 30% income expenditure threshold for mortgages or rent, pointing to the severe need for attainable new housing.

NAHB is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association that includes as part of its federation more than 700 affiliated state and local associations in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Through our "10-point Housing Plan", the NAHB mission is to protect the American Dream of housing opportunities for all. Our thousands of builder members are proud to construct over 80 percent of the housing units produced every year in the United States. Our members include small-volume builders, production builders, multifamily builders, modular housing companies, and residential remodelers. In addition, NAHB includes associate members who span the spectrum of the housing industry, including suppliers, service providers, and product manufacturers.

NAHB works to ensure that all Americans have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing. A healthy housing market serves buyers at all socioeconomic levels, including houses for first time homebuyers and lower- to middle-income purchasers. Many of these middle-income purchasers include those in the military, teachers, and first responders. The location and availability of attainable housing has a major influence on the overall health of a family unit, and determines what school's children can attend, proximity to jobs, access to childcare, and even affects how much time a family spends together at the end of the day.

Conclusion

NAHB joins the Project Applicant in requesting the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Accept the arbitrator's tax exchange determination.
2. Allow the Richards Ranch project to proceed to LAFCO.

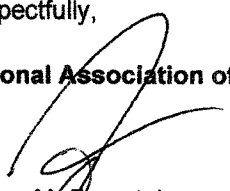
As the Nation's largest home building association, NAHB can and will bring to bear our resources in support of our members and the cause of providing "Housing for All". NAHB respects the role of local land use agencies to administer land use decisions in a fair and equitable manner while simultaneously engaging in situations where our significant expertise can help advance the cause.

In that spirit, we are again hopeful that rational heads will prevail, and the Board of Supervisors will act to allow for this much needed project to immediately go forward.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Respectfully,

National Association of Home Builders



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C: Clerk of the Board, County of Santa Barbara
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Dan Dunmoyer, CBIA
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