

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 10/25/05
Department Name: 3rd Dist. Board of Supervisors
Department No.: 011
Agenda Date: 11/15/05
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time:
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Brooks Firestone
Supervisor, 3rd District

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568-2192

SUBJECT: Membership on the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors adopt the following recommendations regarding the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee:

1. The membership on the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee (APAC) be expanded from five members to seven
2. The two additional seats on the committee be representatives from production agriculture
3. The Agricultural Advisory Committee be established as the official body to make recommendations for the appointments to the additional seats on the APAC
4. The Planning and Development representative on the committee be drawn from the Development Review Division
5. Policy issues outside the Williamson Act and Uniform Rules consistency determinations for projects be addressed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 1. An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community and with Goal No. 4. A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The California Land Conservation Act, also known as the Williamson Act and/or the Agricultural Preserve Program, was enacted in 1965 in order to preserve agriculture and open space. This is a voluntary program where the property owner can contract with the County Board of Supervisors to keep the property in commercial agricultural production and, in return, the property is taxed at the agricultural value of the land, not the market value. A state subvention replaces some of the lost property tax revenues to the County at a

rate of \$5 per acre for prime land and \$1 per acre for non-prime. Currently there are approximately 550,000 acres under contract in Santa Barbara County, 50,000 acres classified as prime and 500,000 classified as non-prime.

The California Government Code requires that all Counties that have an Agricultural Preserve Program adopt uniform local rules for the administration of the program. This Code also requires that the Board of Supervisors appoint an advisory board. This board “shall advise the Board of Supervisors on the administration of the agricultural preserves in the county and on any matters relating to contracts into pursuant to this chapter.” In Santa Barbara County this board is called the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee (APAC).

The first APAC was formed in 1967 and consisted of members of the Board of Supervisors, County Departments and representatives of the agricultural industry. Over the years representation on the committee has changed. The reasons for these changes are unclear, but the current APAC consists of five members representing various County Departments. No industry representatives are members at this time.

At the request of the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen’s Association, the Agricultural Advisory Committee reviewed membership on APAC and has requested that the Board of Supervisors adopt the recommendations stated above. This will again allow agriculture to be represented on the committee.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The Agricultural Preserve Program is not mandated. However, Counties that adopt an Agricultural Preserve Program must adopt uniform local rules (California Government Code Section 51231) and must appoint an advisory board (California Government Code Section 51239).

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

None. Committee members are not reimbursed for expenses.

Special Instructions:

Concurrence: