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February 23, 2012

Board of Supervisors  
Santa Barbara County  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Dear Supervisors,

The members of The Greater Santa Barbara Lodging and Restaurant Association, representing thousands of employees and hundreds of businesses county wide, have read with interest the recent proposal by the owners of the Miramar property for an extension of their permits and a rebate of their future transient occupancy tax payments.

We agree with the Montecito Planning Commission's recommendation for a 1 year extension of the project's Coastal Development Permit.

However, we do not support any rebate of the transient occupancy tax for this or any future project.

We represent existing businesses that employ thousands of people in the county. We have already spent millions and millions of our dollars on our hotels and restaurants and feel that if there are to be any tax rebates, whether property taxes or transient occupancy taxes, then those of us who have already built and are already here, producing revenue and jobs for the community, should be given priority over a newcomer who promises to do something in the future.

As you know transient occupancy taxes are one of the main contributors to the General Fund. It provides for all kinds of services in the county. Allowing this operator to shirk his fair share does not make financial sense for a county that is struggling financially and it sets a precedent for all future developers to ask for tax forgiveness.

We say keep the playing field level and keep the rules the same for all hotel operators – existing and proposed.

Sincerely,

Paul Bullock  
President  
GSBLRA

*The Mission of the Greater Santa Barbara Lodging & Restaurant Association is to represent the interests of the hospitality industry through education, advocacy, and member benefits that serve to promote and enhance our industry and our community.*