

Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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DIST

#6

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February 14, 2011

Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu, Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

**RE: CREF Allocations 2011
Agenda Item #6 2/15/2011**

Honorable Supervisors:

Santa Barbara Audubon helps conserve and restore natural ecosystems and improve biological diversity, principally in the Santa Barbara area, and connects people with birds and nature through education, science-based projects and advocacy.

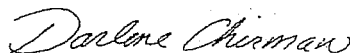
At the hearing February 15, the Board of Supervisors will consider the allocations of CREF funding for 2011. We understand that the acquisition portion will be used to support acquisition of the Ocean Meadows Golf Course, already determined last year. We support that decision and the ecological benefits of that project.

The CEO recommends that the entire general allocation be utilized for two Long Range Planning project, the Gaviota Planning Effort--\$260,580—and the Santa Clause Lane Phase II--\$69,559.

We recognize the severe short-term budget constraints of the county, and support the two planning projects as benefiting the county. However, we wish to state that projects—both projects proposed by county departments and projects proposed by local organizations—have great value to the public. We do not wish to see the CREF funds in the future be restricted to planning efforts or to county departmental projects exclusively. The county and county residents benefit greatly when local non-profits implement coastal enhancement projects, providing ecological and recreational benefits while preserving county staff time and often utilizing volunteer effort to leverage the CREF funds. Santa Barbara Audubon has implemented such projects in the past.

We recommend that you accept external applications, with notification that Internal applications may receive priority in allocations. This appears to be the intent of the CREF program as it was set up.

Sincerely,



Darlene Chirman, President
Santa Barbara Audubon Society