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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 10, 2011

Hon. Joni Gray, Chair and Members of the Board
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street, Fourth Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Coastal Commission Proposed Modifications to the County Land Use & Development Code (LUDC) and Article II

Dear Chairman Gray and Members of the Board:

At the Agricultural Advisory Committee's meeting on January 5, 2011, the Committee unanimously approved a resolution recommending that your Board reject the modifications to the Land Use and Development Code recently approved by the California Coastal Commission.

The Commission's proposed modifications will have a significantly negative impact on agricultural operations in the Coastal Zone. Historically, Santa Barbara County has exempted uses such as cattle grazing, cultivated agriculture and orchards from land use permit requirements. The Coastal Commission's proposed regulations would require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the expansion of these traditionally exempt agricultural uses. The proposed changes would result in increased costs to prepare and process a CDP application and could submit a rancher to significant costs for consultants and legal counsel in processing such an application. If the application is denied, the agricultural viability of future operations on coastal agricultural land would be impaired and potentially rendered uneconomic.

Perhaps even more importantly, the imposition of these modifications amounts to a usurpation of your Board's local land use authority and, has the effect of rendering your commendable and very important work and efforts to establish an inclusive planning process largely irrelevant. Your Board and the citizens of this County have supported agriculturalists in their efforts to continue to farm and ranch in the face of floods and droughts, high labor and water costs, low market prices, incredibly long, hard hours of work, and competition in a global marketplace. The Coastal Commission has demonstrated that it does not have the same localized understanding of the needs of agriculture in Santa Barbara County.

For all of these reasons, the future of agricultural viability in the Coastal Zone depends upon local land use control. Centralized government has no place in the regulation of this County's largest economic driver.

In the interest of preserving our agricultural heritage in the Coastal Zone, please reject the Commission's modifications and keep the planning process local and inclusive.

I speak for all the Committee members in expressing our deep appreciation for your support of agriculture throughout the LUDC process.

Sincerely,

Bradley Miles,
Acting Chair

Committee Members

Bradley Miles
Brian Caird
Jose Baer
LeRoy Scolari
Dorothy Laine
Kari Campbell-Bohard, Vice-Chair
Richard Quandt
Paul Van Leer
Wilja Happe
Grant Creniers, Chair
Willy Chamberlin

Representing

1st District Supervisor, Salud Carbajal
2nd District Supervisor, Janet Wolf
3rd District Supervisor, Doreen Farr
4th District Supervisor, Joni Gray
5th District Supervisor, Joe Centeno
California Women for Agriculture
Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau
Santa Barbara Flower & Nursery Growers' Association
Central Coast Wine Growers Assn
Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Assn.