



August 25, 2017

Chairwoman Joan Hartmann
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: **Rancho La Laguna Appeal - DENY**

Dear Honorable Chair and Supervisors:

The community organizations listed below submit this letter to express our strong support for the Planning Commission's denial of the Rancho La Laguna Project. This rural subdivision is inconsistent with the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan's Agricultural Element Goals and Policies, and with the site's Agricultural Commercial ("AC") land use designation. We recommend denial of the applicants' appeal based on the following reasons in order to protect the County's agricultural resources, to protect the natural resources in the Santa Ynez Valley, and to ensure sound land use planning.

- The Project would convert a 4,000-acre Ranch, containing one house and one cabin and used for grazing and cultivation, to 13 individual parcels with no guarantee of continued agricultural use.
- The Project violates the County's AC land use designation because the primary purpose of this subdivision is to build more homes and provide separate residential estates, not to continue commercial agricultural production.
- The fact that agriculture is not the primary purpose is evidenced by the fact that the owners and applicants let the Williamson Act contract expire and refuse to require continued combined agricultural operations.
- The Project also violates the policies in the County's Agriculture Element that require continued and enhanced agriculture, and the EIR fails to disclose the Project's inconsistency with many Comprehensive Plan policies protecting agriculture and land use compatibility.
- The Project violates County policies protecting water quality, oak woodlands, native grasslands and habitat for rare species. The Ranch abuts the Los Padres National Forest and contains vast habitat for wildlife.
- The EIR does not contain complete information about the development potential or environmental setting, and thus the analysis of environmental impact is inadequate.

Approval of this Project would establish a precedent for subdivisions throughout the Santa Ynez Valley and other County rural areas, in direct contravention to the County's Comprehensive Plan. For these reasons, we urge you to deny this Project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Linda Krop,
Chief Counsel, Environmental Defense Center

Ken Hough,
Executive Director, SBCAN

Cherie Topper,
Executive Director, Santa Barbara Audubon Society

Dan McCarter,
President, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council

Jim Hines, Chair
Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter

Jeff Kuyper,
Executive Director, Los padres Forest Watch

Richard Halsey,
Executive Director, California Chaparral Institute

Marell Brooks,
Executive Director, Citizens Planning Association

Ken Owen,
Executive Director, Channel Islands Restoration

Rebecca Nishide,
Administrative Assistant, Coastal Fund

Andrea Adams-Morden,
Chair, California Native Plant Society Channel Islands

cc: Glenn Russell, Director, Planning and Development Department