



#7

March 13, 2009

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



Re: Item 7, Planning and Development Annual Work Plan

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Dear Supervisors,

The County has been an important partner in the Gaviota Coast conservation effort from its beginning 15 years ago. Today, you have an opportunity to again advance this effort by supporting the funding priorities recommended by the Planning Commission.

There is much to do, but, as usual, funding is scarce, presenting real limitations on what might otherwise be accomplished. In discussions with our partners, we have identified two opportunities for bringing additional funds to the planning efforts. First, we believe the effort to pursue enhanced, local strategies to protect the Gaviota Coast will attract significant grant funding, and I offer our support in securing that funding.

Secondly, by shifting priorities as recommended by the Planning Commission, there may be opportunities to reduce internal costs and free up funds by restructuring the Long Range Planning Division and consolidating it within Planning and Development under one department head. This could result in substantial, upper level salary savings.

The decision last August, led by Supervisor Centeno, to pursue an update to the General Plan and Local Coastal Plan for the Gaviota Coast was instrumental in getting us to where we are today. But it is now mid-March and we anxiously await the next step. To reinvigorate and focus this effort, we urge you to schedule a public workshop as soon as possible to build consensus on how to proceed.

If the Conservancy can be of any assistance in furthering this effort, we stand ready to do so.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Lunsford
President