

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Merritt

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From: Sharyne Merritt <professormerritt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 9, 2024 10:46 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Ag Enterprise ordinance

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Honorable Supervisors,

I have spent years, as a member of both the Gaviota Plan and the AAC, concerned that this ordinance would escalate into something that benefits a few at the cost to many. I had reason for concern.

The ordinance was initially conceived to allow some supplementary activities at Gaviota: nut processing, firewood sales, horseback riding. Not development or entertainment or agritourism, just some additional uses. Years later it got re-envisioned as agritourism and making money for "local farmers."

Well, I guess everyone wants more money. Maybe you could develop an ordinance to let housekeepers and farm workers make more money.

This ordinance will make some people rich. It will bring in investors. (I'll bet the new owner of Vega Vineyard had discussions about the ordinance before he made his purchase.) It will increase the cost of land which is OK with my kids who will inherit my farm, but it will essentially lock out new farmers. It will create noise just like cannabis created odors. Enforcement will be difficult and just like you can't tell which farm is producing noxious odors, you won't be able to tell which farm is producing noxious noise because so many will simultaneously be having events and camping and "educational" opportunities.

While I think the best project is no project at all, here's what I think would make this version tolerable:

No amplified sound – not only are there people living on and near Ag II properties (owners and farm workers whose quality of life should be considered), but the SYRiver as well as creeks are adjacent to or near many Ag II properties that will take advantage of this ordinance. Please consider that fauna that are part of the river ecosystem could be agitated or harmed by amplified sound (think nesting and mating).

No lights – for the same reason. A mountain lion visited my farm, which is adjacent to the SYRiver, twice in the last month. Do you think she might be disturbed by lights and non-ambient sound? Would foxes, coyotes, and deer? What about birds and reptiles? Do we care about anything other making more money?

Any activities should be 1000 feet from property boundaries and 1000 feet from water sources. Sound and light travel far in open land. If the property isn't large enough, then no activities.

Why must farmers and farmworkers and wildlife be disturbed so investors (just watch) can make money? We aren't talking about helping subsistence farmers in SB county. We are talking about people who were lucky enough to inherit land or bought or will buy it for millions of dollars.

I know Planning did a lot of out-reach about this ordinance, but few people know about it. So it's going to be up to the five of you to actually represent your constituency. Please think about this before you vote.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sharyne Merritt, Santa Rosa Rd