



March 26, 2009

*Santa Ynez  
Valley Alliance*

The Honorable Patricia Wiggins, Chair  
Senate Local Government Committee  
State Capitol, Room 4081  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 170 (Flores) relating to cancellation of Williamson Act Contracts

Dear Senator Wiggins:

Senate Bill No. 170, which will soon come before the Senate Local Government Committee, would provide that where a Native American tribe or tribal group has petitioned for immediate cancellation of a Williamson Act contract the presumption is that tribal cultural centers, infrastructure and housing are public concerns that outweigh the objectives of the Williamson Act. The Santa Ynez Valley Alliance wishes to express its strong opposition to this legislation.

As an organization whose mission is to work collaboratively with individuals, groups and governments to **protect the rural character of the Santa Ynez Valley and support good stewardship of natural and agricultural resources** through education, comprehensive planning and public participation, we must **oppose SB 170**. In order to protect the integrity of our valuable agricultural lands, it is critical that tribal governments be subject to the same requirements as **any** property owner wishing to cancel a Williamson Act contract. Under this bill, the Board of Supervisors would have to rebut the above stated presumption in order to prevent the cancellation of such a contract.

The Williamson Act is one of the most important tools that counties have to protect their agricultural lands. It is a fair law, one that allows landowners a tax break in exchange for keeping their land in productive agriculture. It is critical that the integrity of this law be preserved. Otherwise, we will see the erosion of agricultural protection in many of the State's rural areas. Tribes and tribal governments that own property protected by the Williamson Act should be held to the same criteria as anyone else in a similar situation.

Please vote NO on SB 170.

Sincerely,

Mark Oliver, President

cc: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
Senator Tony Strickland  
Karen Keene, CSAC

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