

A-2



Katherine Douglas *Public Comment*

From: Daniel Gullett <dgullett@sblandtrust.org>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 8:29 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Meredith Hendricks; Devin Rothman; Stephanie Diaz; Eric Cárdenas
Subject: Comment Letter for May 12th Board Agenda Item A-2
Attachments: 5.12.26 Board of Supervisors Agenda Item A-2 - Importance of Biodiversity - Land Trust Comments.pdf

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Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please find a comment letter attached from the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County regarding the May 12, 2026 Board of Supervisors Agenda Item A-2, *Resolution Recognizing the Importance of Biodiversity*.

We request that the attached letter be distributed to the Board of Supervisors and posted online with the agenda materials.

Best regards,

Dan

Daniel Gullett

Land Use Planner

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The Land Trust
FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



The Land Trust

FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

OUR MISSION

THE LAND TRUST FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CONSERVES NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OPEN SPACES FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

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May 8, 2026

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

RE: Support for Resolution Recognizing the Importance of Biodiversity

Dear Chair Nelson and Board Members,

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County thanks the County for preparing a Resolution recognizing the importance of biodiversity in our region. Biodiversity includes the species, habitats, and ecological systems that sustain life in Santa Barbara County. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity supports the long-term ecological, economic, and community resilience of the region.

The Land Trust's work across Santa Barbara County reflects many of the values recognized in this Resolution. Over the past four decades, the Land Trust has conserved more than 58,000 acres of natural resources, agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and open space through fee acquisition, conservation easements, land stewardship, restoration, and partnerships with landowners, agencies, and local communities.

The Land Trust's efforts have helped conserve diverse landscapes including coastal and wetland areas such as Carpinteria Bluffs and Carpinteria Salt Marsh; canyon and watershed areas such as Arroyo Hondo Preserve; and working ranch and agricultural lands across the Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Maria Valley, Los Alamos Valley, Gaviota Coast, and the County's foothill regions. Together, these places support biodiversity, habitat connectivity, watershed health, climate resilience, public access, community connection to nature, and the ecosystem services that contribute to the County's economic vitality.

The Land Trust is also a member of the Central Coast Biodiversity Working Group, a regional collaboration of 45 nonprofit organizations advancing biodiversity conservation across California's Central Coast. The group's work

reflects a broad regional commitment to protecting and restoring biodiversity.

Santa Barbara County is uniquely situated where northern and southern ecosystems converge, creating extraordinary biological richness across the region's coastal, inland, and marine environments. These landscapes and ecosystems are fundamental to the character, identity, quality of life, and economic well-being of Santa Barbara County. As recognized in this Resolution, they provide essential long-term benefits including clean air and water, climate regulation, wildfire and erosion protection, agricultural productivity, recreation, and cultural and educational opportunities. The Land Trust's *Thriving Open Spaces Support Healthy Economies* study of natural capital, developed in close collaboration with County partners, further demonstrates that conserved lands and open space provide measurable environmental and economic value to Santa Barbara County. Protecting biodiversity is therefore not only an ecological priority, but also a long-term investment in the County's natural infrastructure, resilience, and prosperity.

Biologically diverse systems face increasing pressure from climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and land use pressures. This underscores the importance of long-term conservation, restoration, stewardship, and regional collaboration. Continued progress depends on sustained local action, strong partnerships, and thoughtful public policy.

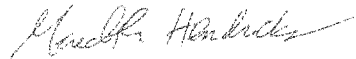
The Resolution appropriately affirms the importance of continued stewardship of the County's natural and working lands and coastal waters. That commitment is also reflected in the County's broader long-range planning framework, including the Comprehensive Plan, Conservation Element, Open Space Element, Recreation Master Plan, Gaviota Coast Plan, and related community and coastal plans.

The Land Trust deeply appreciates the support and collaboration of the Board of Supervisors, County staff, cities, public agencies, landowners, and community partners in helping advance these shared goals. Continued partnership is essential to translate the values recognized in this Resolution into lasting conservation, restoration, responsible public access, and stewardship for current and future generations. As future conservation opportunities arise, continued collaboration between the County and the Land Trust may also help identify appropriate long-term ownership, management, and stewardship arrangements that support biodiversity and other public benefits.

We respectfully request that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Resolution recognizing the importance of biodiversity within Santa Barbara County.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Meredith Hendricks".

Meredith Hendricks
Executive Director
Land Trust for Santa Barbara County