



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Planning and Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: October 21, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Lisa Plowman, Director
Travis Seawards, Deputy Director
Development Review Division
SUBJECT: Ballard Ranch LLC County-Initiated Notice of Nonrenewal of Agricultural Preserve
Contract No. 16-AP-018, Solvang Area, Third Supervisorial District

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and consider the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee (APAC) recommendation of nonrenewal for Agricultural Preserve Contract No. 16-AP-018 due to noncompliance with the Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones, specifically Uniform Rule 1-2.3, Commercial Production and Reporting Requirements;
- b) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the Notice of Nonrenewal for Agricultural Preserve Contract No. 16-AP-018 (Attachment 1);
- c) Direct Planning and Development to serve the Notice of Nonrenewal, and direct the Clerk of the Board to record and distribute copies of the Notice of Nonrenewal as specified in this Board Agenda Letter; and
- d) Determine that the actions above are government administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and are therefore not projects under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Summary Text:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the nonrenewal of Agricultural Preserve Contract (Contract) No. 16-AP-018 due to noncompliance with the Santa Barbara County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones (Uniform Rules), Rule 1-2.3 [Commercial Production and Reporting Requirements]. Contract No. 16-AP-018 went into effect on January 1, 2017, and included Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 137-250-068, 48.21 acres of land under the ownership of Ballard Ranch LLC.

Discussion:

On July 13, 2023, the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee (APAC) considered a request from the property owner, Solomon Aryeh, under Case No. 23DVP-00008, regarding construction of a six-building winery complex intended to support ongoing eligibility of the property as an agricultural preserve. The item was continued to the September 14, 2023, meeting to allow the applicant additional time to provide requested information. The matter was subsequently continued through the following APAC meetings: October 12, 2023; November 9, 2023; February 8, 2024; April 11, 2024; May 9, 2024; July 10, 2024; and April 10, 2025.

At the April 10, 2025 meeting, APAC considered the ongoing eligibility of Contract No. 16-AP-018 and its consistency with the Uniform Rules. While the applicant indicated that vineyards associated with Contract No. 16-AP-017 would be relocated to Contract No. 16-AP-018, the applicant failed to appear at subsequent meetings and did not provide commercial production plans as requested. On July 10, 2025, APAC voted 5-0 to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve nonrenewal of Contract No. 16-AP-018 due to noncompliance with Uniform Rule 1-2.3.

Specifically, the property was found out of compliance with Uniform Rule 1-2.3.A.1, because the contract owner failed to demonstrate compliance with the minimum productive acreage requirements for prime land.

In accordance with Section 6-1.1 of the Uniform Rules, the property must continue to comply with the Williamson Act and Uniform Rules for the duration of the contract, which would expire by its own terms on **December 31, 2034**. Because the property was found to not comply with the Uniform Rules during this time, it is recommended that the Board approve the nonrenewal of the Contract.

Background:

Government Code §51200 (known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or the Williamson Act) provides that local jurisdictions may establish an agricultural preserve program having the goal of retaining land in agricultural use. The County of Santa Barbara has adopted such a program, which is codified under the Uniform Rules. Both the County's Uniform Rules and the Government Code provide that agricultural preserve contracts between the County and landowners are voluntary.

Agricultural preserve contracts secure an enforceable restriction on real property to further the public interest of preserving agricultural use in exchange for reduced property tax assessments to the landowner. Failure to meet conditions of the contract is a breach of contract. In such circumstances, Government Code §51245 provides that the County may serve written notice of nonrenewal of the contract upon the landowner in advance of the annual renewal date of the

contract. Unless such written notice is served by the county at least 60 days prior to the renewal date, the contract shall be considered renewed as provided in Section 51244 or Section 51244.5.

Should the Board of Supervisors approve and authorize the Chair to execute the Notice of Nonrenewal (Attachment 1) for Agricultural Preserve Contract No. 16-AP-018 due to noncompliance with Uniform Rule 1-2.3 [Commercial Production and Reporting Requirements], Planning & Development (P&D) staff shall service the landowner with the Notice of Nonrenewal. The Clerk of the Board shall record the Notice of Nonrenewal and distribute copies as specified under "Special Instructions" in this Board Agenda Letter.

Pursuant to Government Code § 51245, upon receipt by the landowner of a Notice of Nonrenewal, the landowner may make a written protest of the Notice of Nonrenewal to P&D. The protest must be submitted within 10 days of the Board action, by 5:00 PM on October 31, 2025, in order to allow for processing of the protest prior to the renewal date. The County may, at any time prior to the renewal date, withdraw the Notice of Nonrenewal.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The total estimated cost to process this agricultural preserve contract nonrenewal is approximately \$3,000.00. This nonrenewal action is County-initiated, therefore it is paid through budgeted permitting fees. Processing for this project is budgeted in the Permitting Budget Program on Page 307 of the County of Santa Barbara Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Adopted Budget. A "Notice of Nonrenewal" starts the nine-year nonrenewal period. During the nonrenewal process, the annual tax assessment continually increases each year until it is equivalent to current tax rates at the end of the nonrenewal period.

The current assessed value for the 51.71-acre property with improvements thereon under the now breached Contract is \$1,984,100, with a **1.07975%** resulting in approximately **\$21,423.32**. The recommended actions would increase the property's assessed value, and in-turn County revenue, phased each year for the next nine years of the nonrenewal period to arrive at the Proposition 13 property value.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2025-2026	Total
General Fund		
P&D Permitting Budget Program Fees	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total		\$3,000

Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board shall obtain required signatures on the Notice of Nonrenewal (Attachment 1 and Exhibit A to Attachment 1), and provide a copy of the executed Notice of Nonrenewal to P&D by October 30, 2025.

P&D Staff shall serve the landowner with a copy of the executed Notice of Nonrenewal by certified mail, return receipt requested, at least 60 days prior to the contract renewal date of January 1, 2026 (by November 1, 2025):

- 801 E. Highway 246 Solvang, CA 93463

Clerk of the Board shall record the executed Notice of Nonrenewal with the Clerk-Recorder's Office no later than 20 days after service of the Notice of Nonrenewal upon the landowner.

Clerk of the Board shall distribute copies of the recorded Notice of Nonrenewal and the Board of Supervisor's Minute Order reflecting the County's nonrenewal of the contract within 30 days of the service of the Notice of Nonrenewal upon the landowner as follows:

- David Villalobos, Planning and Development Department, Hearing Support
- Emily Fischer, Planning and Development Department
- Gwen Beyeler, Planning and Development Department
- Assessor's Office
- Surveyor's Office
- Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Commissioner's Office
- Jose Chang, Agricultural Commissioner
- David Shabazian, California Director of Conservation; 801 K Street, MS 24-01, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Owner: Ballard Ranch LLC 8460 San Fernando Rd. Sun Valley, CA 91352

Attachments:

Attachment A - Notice of Nonrenewal with Exhibit A, Legal Description

Attachment B - Vicinity Map

Attachment C - Excerpt from APAC Minutes

Contact Information:

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Development Review Division, Planning and Development Department

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