

Mar. 20, 2009

To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

RE: Proposed La Purisima Golf Resort – Mar. 24 agenda

Dear Chair Centeno and Members of the Board:

**What can we do to stimulate our local economy? 1. Resort, hotel and banquet facilities
2. Golfers 3. Wine tourism 4. Jobs and construction 5. More gambling?**

Many Lompoc business leaders and vintners see the first four items among those projected by the proposed Hunter La Purisima resort as a panacea for Lompoc Valley and beyond. But conscientious county planners, many agriculture interests and concerned citizens see beyond the glitz. The original concept of the Hunter project, with a few modifications, could arguably be an asset to the community, were it not for their request to rezone ag lands to resort/commercial to enable their development, opening the door to possible urbanized development on 47 county rural parcels.

Theirs is a good idea, in the wrong place, at the wrong time and under the wrong circumstances:

- 1. The golf resort would have an 80-room hotel, banquet center and other amenities. Lompoc already has public meeting accommodations in place or in the planning stages, including a community/senior center, the renovated Veterans Memorial Building and the approved 4-story, 155-room Hilton Garden Inn. The resort's hotel could signify more unneeded development to compete with Lompoc facilities.**
- 2. Golfing is generally flat around the country, with many courses losing their core golfers and fewer young golfers hitting the links, according to some national publications. Newer golf resorts can be in competition with established courses, with the latter often losing membership.**
- 3. Wine tourism may be good for business. But even discriminating visitors may not be interested in a remote vacation destination, given the ailing economy. The UCSB Economic Forecast predicts a very weak state economy for years, "perhaps decades."**
- 4. Employment by the proposed Hunter project would mostly generate lower-paying service jobs. Construction could only temporarily provide a boost in tax revenue for the city, some three miles distant. Residual "tourism" would be problematical.**

Without boundaries between urban and rural lands, agriculture and open space could be swallowed by leapfrog development and the character of Santa Barbara County would be forever changed, including the Gaviota Coast. We already have a gambling casino in Santa Ynez Valley; why gamble away our land on urban sprawl and its attendant problems? We urge you to please vote no to the Hunter resort project and ag zoning change request.

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