



May 10, 2012

RE: Letter of Support for Proposed Merger of Homeless-focused Groups and Activities


Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

On May 15, 2012 your Board will consider support for the merger of *Bringing Our Community Home: the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness*; the Homeless Advisory Committees in Lompoc, Santa Maria and on the South Coast; and Common Ground Santa Barbara. Our organization would like to urge you to support this merger to improve County-wide cross-sector coordination and direct your staff to plan accordingly for the coming fiscal year. As indicated in the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report on Homeless Mentally Ill Indigent recidivism, there is a need for centralized coordination among public and non-profit resources to combat the poverty, mental and physically illness, and addiction issues at the root of chronic homelessness.

Our organization is focused on **the provision of permanent affordable rental housing with appropriate supportive services**. As part of the proposed re-organization, we will be involved in this collaborative effort by **participating in the CAG/HST/providing input to the Leadership Council**. Our efforts will be represented on the Coordination Committee and we will work collaboratively to focus on improving all parts of the continuum through this process. We believe that the new structure establishes a clear avenue for members of the public and concerned advocates to provide direct input to policymakers at the Leadership Council meetings during public comment.

We respectfully urge you to take the necessary steps to make changes to existing ordinances or create new ones to codify this new structure; and to find matching funds in the coming fiscal cycle for the County's share to establish the centralized infrastructure and dedicated staffing for this effort.

Sincerely,

  
John Polansky,  
Director of Housing Development