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**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2009 2:53 PM

**To:** Warnstrom, Susan

**Cc:** Gray, Joni

**Subject:** La Purisima Resort Project

Supervisor Gray:

The La Purisima Resort Project has potential to provide the Lompoc Valley a significant economic boost. Living in the Lompoc Valley since 1967, I had resigned myself to living in what has become Santa Barbara County's stepchild. While the county's other cities have thrived and captured revenue producing industries, Lompoc has languished in the shadows. Recently, with the growth of the wine industry, the city administration has renewed attempts to re-invent Lompoc as a tourist attraction. Now, however threatening that might be to the other tourist destinations in the county, Lompoc needs the boost that the LP Project can provide. It is no longer enough to say "Lompoc has VAFB. That should be enough."

Because of the presumed threat to agriculture, the project faces significant obstacles. Yet, historically, the family farms are becoming corporate entities. More agricultural products are being produced on less acreage. Witness what has happened to the Lompoc Valley's flower industry. Farmers, such as they are, are producing surpluses that then are often subsidized by the government programs like the Resource Management Act which is the Soil Bank in other areas. Where possible, farmland has been sold to developers who have in turn overbuilt the area.

The developer of the LP Project is not proposing to overbuild his property. Apparently he is attempting to make his investment in our community viable. The city continues to experience economic hits as corporations (Penny's, Mervyn's, Rite Aid, Michael's) experience corporate wide losses and then simply abandon the area. Lompoc has also lost locally owned recreational facilities like the skating rink and the bowling alley. Well, La Purisima GC opened in 1986 and has struggled to gain a financial foothold. Yet, the owner/developer has not abandoned the community and, at the moment, apparently he has no intention to abandon us.

Connected to the agriculture objection, critics of the LP Project insist that numerous other projects are waiting in the wings to see what happens with La Purisima. However, since the county has already provided La Purisima a waiver from agriculture to recreation, La Purisima already offers a significant difference from other projects. Evidently, in the past, the county saw fit to permit the Hunter family an opportunity to see whether they could make a golf course profitable in the Lompoc Valley. In good faith, they have tried. Now, in what we all know are difficult economic times, Mr. Hunter has proposed taking another financial risk to benefit our community. Perhaps, the county can see its way to help him help us.

Thank you for your consideration.

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