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Katherine Douglas *Public Comment*

From: Richard Flacks <rflacks@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 11:30 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Nancy Avoce; Lisa Carlos; Linda Honikman
Subject: comment on 4/8/25 agenda item D-2: Workforce Housing Study

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Dear BoS Chair Capps and Board Members:

The Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN) welcomes the comprehensive Workforce Housing Study. The data and understandings it presents, and the thrust of its recommendation open important opportunity for housing progress in our county.

The SB league of Women Voters letter to the Board argues for policy priorities which SBCAN fully endorses. These include strong endorsement of county staff recommendations for swift movement on enabling affordable housing development on particular county parcels.

We share, as well, the LWV sense of urgency to move forward to enable affordable housing development. We urge establishment of a County Housing Trust Fund and revenue streams for such a fund. Creating a local financial base for affordable housing is necessary in the absence of adequate state and federal programs that address the affordability crisis experienced by the workforce--and given the current Washington regime, that national policy failure will worsen.

We share the LWV concerns. and support their recommendations, regarding inclusionary policy.

We have been mobilizing community support for use of county owned land for housing and are encouraged by the Study's emphasis on this. Establishment of a Community Land Trust would provide a framework for such a program. We believe that leadership for such an effort could come from community foundation and organizational initiative. County staff shouldn;t be overloaded with entrepreneurial efforts. Instead, we urge board members to reach out to community leadership to create the funding and the organizational framework for a Housing Land trust and public housing funding.

The Harris report did not examine the role of UCSB in the provision of workforce housing. Some 15 years ago, UCSB advanced a long range plan providing for development of more than 1800 units of affordable employee housing on campus land. To date, UCSB has failed to implement these plans. We believe the county must exert stronger pressure on UCSB to fulfill its housing promises. UCSB's failure to do this has much to do with the regional housing crisis, and UCSB has lagged behind other UC campuses with respect to faculty and staff housing development.

We would like to assure you that there is wide public support and energy for determined county action to realize the promise reflected in the Study. We hope your good offices can help mobilize that energy.

Sincerely,
Richard Flacks
SBCAN co-president.