



# Report on Agricultural Grading Exemptions

Planning and Development  
Long Range Planning Division

Board of Supervisors Hearing  
July 12, 2011



## Report on Agricultural Grading Exemptions

- Six counties were surveyed: Monterey, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sonoma and Ventura
- Inland and coastal grading regulation were reviewed.
- A representative in each county was contacted.
- The report summarizes exemption process, grading exemptions, and definitions for each county.
- The report does not include: grading exemptions not applicable to ag, types of permits required for grading or grading standards.



## Similarities Among Counties Surveyed

- All counties have exemptions for earth moving activities related to agriculture.
- Similar criteria used to allow for exemptions:
  - steepness of slope
  - amount of cut and fill material
  - distance to sensitive resources
- All counties exempt routine agricultural practices on previously cultivated or grazed land from a permit and/or review process.



## Chart Summarizing Similar Criteria

County	Written Exemption Required	Common Criteria That Trigger a Permit		
		Slope	Amount of Cut/Fill	Sensitive Resources
Santa Barbara		X	X	X
Monterey		X	X	X
San Diego			X	
San Luis Obispo	X	X	X	
Santa Cruz		X	X	
Sonoma		X	X	
Ventura	X	X	X	X



## Differences Among Counties Surveyed

- Specific threshold amounts vary among the counties (i.e. 50 vs. 100 cubic yards of cut and fill).
- Permit triggers unique to some counties include:
  - distance to property line or urban boundary line
  - potential for significant environmental damage
  - depth of water impounding structure
  - grading in new areas
- San Luis Obispo and Ventura counties require written exemptions for some agricultural grading exemptions.



## Staff Summary and Recommendation

- Santa Barbara County's agricultural grading exemptions and protocols are similar to those in other counties.
- Staff does not recommend changing existing protocols or requiring County verification for agricultural grading exemptions.
- Questions?