

providing quality housing and communities

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Supervisor Salud Carbajal
Chairman of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu St.
Fourth Floor
Santa Barbara, CA

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Dear Chairman Salud Carbajal and fellow supervisors:

Because of unavoidable scheduling conflicts that cannot be changed, the Home Builders Association cannot attend and speak during the Tuesday, April 15, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors discussion on land use development fee increases. So we are submitting this written testimony instead.

The association is disappointed to see that the county may increase our costs for the reasons stated in the staff report.

It is not the fault of new residential or commercial builders that county employees have a much better retirement package than most private sector employees receive. In addition, we are in the midst of a historically deep housing production slump. The county is not and will not be receiving for some time many applications for new residential developments.

Home builders are laying off workers, leaving the area, losing projects they have worked on for a half-decade on, or simply going out of business.

Yet you are considering an hourly increase that includes both \$6.96 for retirement benefits and \$2.62 for planning staff to make sure projects are consistent with the General Plan and make us pay \$165 more per hearing for more than three sessions before the Board of Architectural Review, even though builders do not determine how many times the BAR wants to review a project.

At a time when new residential development already makes almost no fiscal sense to build in Santa Barbara County, it is poor public policy to increase our costs 7.1 % to fix a retirement problem we did not create and cannot control and to retain workers who do not have much work.

County government should hold itself to the same realistic fiscal standards the private sector does by reducing the workforce and halting pay and benefit increases during times like these. Government should be more responsible, not make us pay more than our share.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Bunin

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