

## Lenzi, Chelsea

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**From:** Conrad Green <cg@conradgreen.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2015 4:11 PM  
**To:** Board Letters  
**Subject:** Conrad Green Letter in Regards to Las Varas Ranch Project  
**Attachments:** LasVarasRanchLetterCGREEN.docx

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached my letter of comment on the Las Varas Ranch Project currently under review. I would like you to consider the opinions contained in the letter before deciding on accepting or rejecting the Las Varas Ranch Project. I believe the deadline for submissions is tomorrow at midday so I am sending this e-mail to ensure the letter makes that deadline. I have also mailed a hard copy, signed, but I don't know if that will reach you in time.

Thanks you for your consideration

Conrad Green

Conrad Green  
10697 Calle Quebrada  
El Capitan Ranch  
Goleta  
CA 93117  
323-610-6536

**ATTN:** Chair Janet Wolf  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

27 August 2015

**VIA EMAIL TO BOARDLETTERS@CO.SANTA-BARBARA.CA.US**

**RE: Las Varas Ranch Project**

Dear Chair Wolf and Honorable Supervisors:

I am a resident and property owner on the Gaviota Coast. I live on The El Capitan Ranch, directly adjoining Las Varas and have come to know the area extremely well. Having followed the Gaviota Coast Plan for some time I have strong feelings about the outcome of the Las Varas project you are currently considering.

What is being proposed by Las Varas is a fantastic enhancement to the area and I would urge that you vote for the project to pass. To not do so would waste a unique opportunity to give good access to the public whilst still preserving the key features of a wild landscape that has become iconic in California. To pass up this opportunity would be crazy and negligent- every alternative I've heard is unrealistic, unenforceable, would be opposed vehemently by those who live-in and care for the Gaviota coast, would be wildly expensive and, crucially, would damage, disrupt and forever change a unique and valuable ecosystem.

The Las Varas Ranch is about as untouched an agricultural property that isn't a National Park as once could find on the California coast south of South Francisco. This has been achieved by a family of committed owners have had no need to push for development over the last 50 years. In exchange for redrawing lot lines on their ranch they are being asked to exact a high price, which is reasonable, but their request should

also be treated reasonably. The plan they're offering, that has been 10 years in the making with extensive consultation with all parties, will preserve this almost untouched property as seen from both the coast and the road. It'll also allow hikers for the first time to have properly serviced and maintained access to areas that have hitherto been completely private property. The realignments of property lines being asked for by the ranch will result in less, not more, building on the land and all in areas that are sensitive to the environment and the don't affect the views of beach-goers and those passing by. They've provided protection for areas of environmental and archeological interest and have guaranteed to keep the ranch in this condition for many years into the future. Frankly, it is an example of a property owner working really hard to find a compromise for the desires of all parts of the community that want access to an area and, most importantly, to protect a genuinely unique ecosystem in California.

It's also clear that in their response to the EIR almost every key concern has been addressed and mitigated against- effectively there is no reasonable way I can see that one could deny the request to change property lines. So much care has been made to protect habitats for everything from butterflies to bats, to ensure responsible and careful use of the agricultural land and to protect the ancient native sites on property. While there has been reasonable pushback on some of the asks from the conditions of approval, that I'm sure others will address in more detail, the vast majority of them have been met and addressed.

Some groups have represented this project as a chance to try to build McMansions or large estates by the sea. This is a nonsense. The amount of self-inflicted restrictions on where and how properties can be built on the ranch in the proposal simply wouldn't allow this to happen. The small lot-sizes, protection of habitats and archeological sites, height and sight-line restrictions and grazing cattle make this concept ludicrous. The amount of lots will decrease and the building on them is strictly- controlled.

If this opportunity to create unprecedented public access on private coastal property and assurances of environmental protection isn't taken, what does it say about the relationship between committed, concerned landowners and the government bodies that oversee them? For citizens to adjust property lines on their own large property shouldn't come attached with onerous and coercive demands. If someone can spend this much time and money trying to make a fair and generous offer and have it thrown back in their face with unrealistic demands for more, it will lead to a wholesale breakdown of trust and goodwill between property owners and the government bodies that are meant to work with them. It would indicate to me that decision-makers would

rather listen to some small yet powerful lobbying groups who ask for unrealistic, unenforceable and hugely expensive change than respect landowners who give up significant rights to their own land in search of a genuine and excellent compromise.

In this particular case I suspect that a denial of the project will leave a bitter taste in the mouth of many local land-owners given how much work the Las Varas Ranch have put into reaching a compromise that gives many unprecedented benefits to the larger community. I'd urge you to look at the enormous amount of positives that the Las Varas Proposal contains and seize this opportunity for access and land-protection that will almost certainly never arise again. It is an opportunity that should be embraced, not scorned.

Yours faithfully

Conrad Green

## Lenzi, Chelsea

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**From:** Gail Freeman <gailfreeman9@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2015 8:17 PM  
**To:** Board Letters  
**Subject:** Las Varas Ranch Project

Dear Chair Wolf and Honorable Supervisors:

I have been a resident and property owner on the Gaviota Coast for 60 years. I have followed the Gaviota Coast plan process and have a significant interest in the outcome of the Las Varas project. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of the project as the alternative is unthinkable.

In my estimation the County is being offered the best of both worlds, preserving the ranch in agriculture, view sheds and cultural sites while giving the public unprecedented access with trails and beach access along with on site parking. The trails being offered are best for the public's safety, the ranch and the environment. Asking for more than is offered by the property owner runs the risk of the public never gaining legal access.

I understand why the applicants version of the conditions of approval are necessary and reasonable. As a rancher who's property borders a State park on the Gaviota coast I have a keen understanding of the needs and the steps necessary to protect the environment as well as public safety. As an agriculturist I see the necessity of a fence that will keep the public separated from sensitive orchards, cattle operations as well as protection of the public.

As a Rancher who has a conservation easement, I have a understanding and respect for what it takes to protect biologically sensitive areas that need not be disturbed by the public. I strongly suggest that you adhere to their recommended blueprint for the trails.

Sincerely, Leslie Freeman & Family

**Lenzi, Chelsea**

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**From:** Sey Fletch <seyfletch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2015 5:14 AM  
**To:** Board Letters  
**Subject:** Las Varas Ranch Proposal

Chair Janet Wolf  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Re: Las Varas Ranch proposal

Dear Chair Wolf and Honorable Supervisors:

I have lived on the Gaviota Coast for 23 years, and I **have studied the Las Varas Ranch proposition.**

Please accept my assurance, my opinion is independent and I have no financial interest in whatever way you decide to approve or disapprove this plan.

Just over 25 years ago, my wife and I escaped the intense hustle of life in Los Angeles. We worked hard, saved up and borrowed to buy a 30 acre parcel of land in the upper Refugio Canyon area, about 5 miles from Refugio Beach. It was the best thing we ever did. We felt like we had moved to heaven. We never looked back.

Living in the last undeveloped coastal habitat in Southern California is a privilege we cherish.

**The biological and botanical characteristics of the Gaviota Coast are immensely important.** There is no other complete coastal ecosystem in Southern California where the pyramid of species of animals, plants, insects and birds has been left relatively untouched except on the Gaviota Coast. Nowhere else on the entire Southern California coastline do bears, mountain lions, bobcats, deer, coyote, raccoon, weasels, possum, skunk, squirrels, rabbits, rodents, insects, owls, hawks, numerous flocks of migratory birds, and a multitude of other living creatures, trees and plants function and survive, though their living environment is threatened on all sides by the pressures of a continual population boom.

We are thankful for the foresight of the public servants of Santa Barbara County who saw the **importance of agricultural land not only as the essential supplier of food, but also as a buffer between urban development and the wild land, the Los Padres National Forest**, the natural sanctuary in our midst. The founder of the National Forests systems, President Theodore Roosevelt himself, rode through, camped and hunted on the Gaviota Coast. He saw the western forest wild lands being grabbed by lumber companies, open land torn up uncontrollably by silver, gold and copper miners with the

acquiescence of the U.S. Federal Government, at a time when the Department of the Interior served as a rubber stamp for the land-grabbing desires of the most powerful and richest people in the country, the lumber kings and the miners. No mind was being paid to the wasteland left by the copper miners, the clear-cutters, and the like because it was in a remote wilderness, far from the population centers of the time. Indeed, the Clark Estate, that most cherished and recent acquisition of this county was owned and built by the father of Huguette Clark who made his fortune grabbing thousands of acres of open land when it was there for the asking, mined copper from massive open pits, and who was an avowed and open enemy of Roosevelt. As a member of the U.S. Senate, Clark and his allied interests tried to dismantle Roosevelt's dream of saving the land by under-funding the National Forest Service.

The long-term Las Varas Ranch plan to preserve and use the land for its historical purpose of farming and ranching and limit the development footprint of each parcel site is commendable. They are going to designate public trails and beach access via trails from a parking area. Really? Can you imagine that happening in Malibu? No way. Walking through private property to go to the beach? Please show me where I can do that. Walk around it to get to the beach, that is, if you can find a place to park. Don't wander too far above the mean high tide line! Then there are those who take their lives and boards in their hands and run across the 101, and hike across the private land at Naples to get to the beach.

As I understand it, about thirty years ago the county could have bought Naples for a million dollars. What a mistake to pass that one by.

What will happen if this opportunity is dismissed? Do political climates change? Will the force of population growth overcome suburban limits? Human history is undeniably a growth story, never more so than in California.

A few years ago, just before the downturn and recession that began in 2008, the California Legislature mandated a requirement for each county in the state to prepare for the development of thousands of new homes to cope with expected population growth. There's 40 million people in California. Make no mistake about it, the environmental movement might be powerful, but the builders and bankers hold real sway in the pits of Sacramento.

If it weren't for the the farmers and ranchers of Santa Barbara there wouldn't be any open space left anywhere near the coast. There is a way of life at stake here, and it is not to be found anywhere else in Southern California.

This proposal should not be flayed and crushed with rallying cries and soundbites that dismiss the sincerity and sacrifice of the few who provide sustenance for the many.

If it weren't for conscientious officials like yourselves and the many who served before you who fully appreciate the responsibility to maintain the balance of human civilization as being a part of the environment along with the natural habitat, the preservation of open land, farm and ranch land in this County would have gone the way of the entire Los Angeles and Orange County basin. Too awful to contemplate.

I have so much respect for the ranchers and farmers who are my neighbors. They love the land they live on and have sacrificed to preserve it for its historical uses. Some of them have ancestors who came with Father Serra, hundreds of years ago. This is multi-generational farm and ranch land. The roots are very deep.

The people of California have the legal right to go on the beaches. Many of them like to take hikes and breathe the air of the open land. Public access - the way in - has always been another story.

Las Varas Ranch is making an offer that is too good to refuse. It is historic. It is a compromise that's a blueprint for preserving the land for its traditional uses balanced with a true gift to the public.

Seems like a good deal to me.

Yours Truly,

Seymour Fletcher

2020 Refugio Road  
Gaviota, Ca 93117

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Cellphone and Text **805-896-5600**  
Home/Office: **805-685-1432** Fax 805-685-1532

Business Mail: P.O. BOX 8506, GOLETA, CA 93118



**Lenzi, Chelsea**

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**From:** Catherine Epperson <catherinepepperson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2015 8:43 AM  
**To:** Board Letters  
**Subject:** Comment Letter - Sept 1, 2015 Agenda Item 15-00548  
**Attachments:** BOS Letter for Doheny Project.docx

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Catherine Epperson  
Parks Land and Cattle Company, Inc.  
o: 805.968.1790  
c: 805.680.6893

8/28/2015

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Catherine Parks Epperson  
1165 Las Varas Canyon Road  
Goleta, CA 93117S

Via Email to Boardletters@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

Chair Janet Wolf  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Las Varas Ranch Project, Agenda Item 15-00548

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing in support of the Doheny project however I am totally against the process and the cost that the county has forced upon the Doheny family. Details of my specific objections follow and I want you all to know how very dysfunctional and expensive this whole process has been. As stewards of the public trust you should be ashamed of yourselves. If we in agriculture functioned in this way, we would certainly be out of business long ago.

I am flabbergasted at the hoops you have forced upon the Doheny family at significant cost to themselves and to the county tax payers. The initial request was quite simple, lot line adjustments to align their existing lots with the current zoning and to locate building sites for homes that are allowed, following existing zoning all the while preserving the agricultural functions of the ranch.

Yet you allowed yourselves to be swayed by those who think their wants are more important than the needs of the property owners. Your process has gone beyond ensuring current laws, you have gone to the extreme of using the process to coerce the land owners to give public access across their private lands. To compound the injury, after three viable trails were agreed to by the land owners, there is still the attempt to force a non-viable trail across the bluff. I just don't get it, I thought we lived in a society that valued private property and the rights of land owners. I also thought that agriculture was a valued industry in the county. I sure don't see any evidence of those ideals in this process.

Being more specific, here are my comments, in no particular order:

- 1) Besides being injurious to the agricultural operations the requested bluff top trail has significant environmental issues that are being overlooked or just ignored. They certainly can't be mitigated away. The impact of the bluff trail on the cattle operations is also being ignored. Having cattle myself I am well aware of the trouble dogs and human intrusion can have on a herd. What about the safety issues of the railroad tracks and the costs to mitigate those away? Why are you turning down the three well thought out trails that are being offered which are safe, don't impact the environment and don't impede the agricultural operations? I implore you to not re-insert the bluff trail requirement.
- 2) As a rancher and agricultural property owner, I strongly oppose Condition #25, which prohibits the conversion of grazing land to more intensive farming because of native vegetation. The conditions already impose setbacks from environmentally sensitive habitat. Since when does this County oppose farming just because it disturbs native habitat? Sometimes, more intensive agricultural operations are necessary to retain the overall long-term viability of the operation. Cattle grazing isn't a big money-maker. During WWII, a lot of land that is now used for grazing was used for growing vegetables and other field crops. I've never seen such a condition imposed on productive agricultural land. Usually, it is a significant environmental impact to take several acres out of production and now the County is imposing a condition that prevents putting good farm ground to work. This is completely inconsistent with promoting long-term viability of an agricultural operation and would set an unacceptable precedent that is inconsistent with other County policies that favor agricultural productivity.
- 3) Fencing along the public trails – the landowner should have the right to build whatever fence they think appropriate to keep the public off of the private lands. It's bad enough to be forced to give away trails, it compounds the injury to not be allowed to build the fences necessary to protect the surrounding agricultural operations and privacy of the property owner. The suggestion that if the simple fence doesn't work the property owner can submit another request and go through yet another costly review process when the first fence fails is unreasonable. You may not realize that our farming operations has yet another set rules which we must live by. Good Agricultural Practices required by the Federal Government requires us to take measures to keep animals and unnecessary humans out of our orchards. We can't do much about wild animals, even if we wanted to, but we can and must keep domestic out. Not to mention the theft from the orchards that are now accessible. As for the grazing lands, we have a small cow herd and the "public" is not the reasonable animal that you think they are. As recently as last week trespassers cut locks off of our gates allowing our herd to get onto the Calle Real. These same folks drove a mile up a dirt road cuttin open other gates which could have allowed those same cows to get onto the Exxon property next door. The public doesn't have any regard for the property rights of the landowners and as such, strong measures must be taken from the outset to keep them where they belong!

[TYPE THE COMPANY NAME]

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In conclusion, the project preserves the stunning panoramic views from Highway 101 toward the ocean, especially the view of the old barns and the huge pasture land. Tim Doheny, a good friend of my fathers, wanted to preserve these iconic views for future generations while leaving for his family members parcels that they could own after he passed away. His widow is trying to realize his vision for the ranch and I admire her persistence – this has been a long, hard process that has consumed years and, I suspect huge sums of money, to get to this point. I urge the Board not to throw away this chance to approve a project that preserves the viewshed and sensitive environmental resources, keeps the agricultural operation viable, offers dedication of 3 public trails, and reduces the number of parcels from those that exist now. These are all goals that the Gaviota Coast Plan seeks to accomplish and the GavPAC trail option mirrors the ranch trails being offered. Your Board has the opportunity to do the right thing for future generations and approve this project.

Sincerely,

Catherine Parks Epperson

**Lenzi, Chelsea**

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**From:** n wong <n\_wong\_00@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2015 9:59 AM  
**To:** Board Letters  
**Subject:** Comments on the Las Varas Ranch Project  
**Attachments:** LasVaras.pdf

To the County Board of Supervisors

Please enter my attached comments into the public record regarding the Las Varas Ranch project.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Wong  
resident of Gaviota, CA

Chair Janet Wolf  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
RE: Las Varas Ranch Project

August 27, 2015

Dear Chair Wolf and Honorable Supervisors:

I am a resident and property owner on the Gaviota Coast. I have followed the Gaviota Coast Plan process and have a significant interest in the outcome of the Las Varas project. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of the project because the alternative is unthinkable.

Las Varas Ranch, and its companion property, Edwards Ranch, provide an iconic view of the Gaviota area. They are coming to you with a plan for preserving this incredible view into the distant future encompassing many of your (the County's) numerous and excessive conditions to ensure further resource protection. They have worked with you for over 10 years to satisfy your concerns and preserve their operations, lifestyle and property rights. An offer to dedicate three public trails and a parking lot to serve the trails is more than a generous offer being proposed for any agricultural property in the County, let alone on the Gaviota Coast.

The impacts to agriculture, biological resources, cultural resources, and aesthetics (particularly the viewsheds for Highway 101, the railroad, and the beach) have been addressed by both the applicant and County staff.

- Agriculture -- The property already has a demonstrated successful track record for agricultural productivity and long-term viability. The maximum development envelope size isn't allowed to exceed the limit set by the County's Agricultural Preserve Uniform Rules.
- Biological Resources -- the building envelopes have been sited to avoid impacts to biological resources and conditions of approval accepted by the applicant provide further protection and avoidance of biological resource. This ranch has diversity of grassland types, native and non-native, as well as a Monarch butterfly roosting area, plenty of trees for nesting by raptors and other birds, and sensitive plant species, particularly along the coastal bluffs. All of these will be preserved with the project. Above all, though, continuing the communal grazing operation will provide the greatest biological preservation because grazing land makes excellent habitat for a broad range of species, plant and animal.
- Cultural Resources -- The development envelopes, public trails proposed by the applicant, and roads are sited to avoid impacts on archaeological resources. The project also honors the historical buildings that contribute mightily to the rural character of this land.
- Aesthetics/Visual Resources --. The conditions include reasonable and effective height. The reality for this ranch is that it comprises 9 existing legal parcels. And all of the existing parcels are visible from either Highway 101 or the railroad tracks or both. You can't change that. The project would result in a reduction to 7 parcels. That's an improvement over no project. It makes no difference that the project results in one parcel being moved from north of Highway 101 to south of the highway. It will be in the highway viewshed either way.
- Las Varas is providing the County with a generous and unprecedented offer for a public trails dedication.

I don't believe you have grounds to deny this project. The EIR, which includes a revision to respond to a long list of issue areas raised by the Board for further analysis, concludes that there are no significant environmental impacts that haven't been mitigated.

The County should do the right thing and approve this project. Any other decision would be disingenuous on the County's part which touts that it wants to work with the landowners to the mutual benefit of both. To me, that does not include onerous restrictions that tie the hands and bankrupts landowners both procedurally and monetarily. Any other decision would only highlight the lack of understanding of agricultural/ranching's historical significance, preservation and operations that the County claims to want to preserve and exposes the shallow unreasonableness of bureaucracy and greed.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Wong  
Resident of Gaviota, CA.