



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Planning and
Development
Department No.: 053
For Agenda Of: July 12, 2011
Placement: Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: Yes
If Yes, date from: June 7, 2011
Vote Required: N/A

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Glenn Russell, Ph.D., Director
Director: Planning and Development Department
Contact Info: Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planner, 681-5604
Long Range Planning Division
SUBJECT: Report on Agricultural Grading Exemptions

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions: Receive and file this report.

Summary

At the November 2, 2010 hearing, your Board requested that staff research other jurisdictions and return as appropriate with recommendations regarding protocols for agricultural grading exemptions.

Staff reviewed the agricultural grading exemptions in six other counties: Monterey, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sonoma and Ventura. These counties were chosen because they are near Santa Barbara County, have a coastal zone, and/or contain similar types of agriculture. After reviewing the grading regulations, a representative in each county was contacted by telephone to discuss agricultural grading exemptions and protocols. Once the information was collected, agricultural grading exemptions and protocols were compared to those in Santa Barbara County.

All counties had exemptions for earth moving activities related to agriculture. Similar criteria were used to allow for exemptions but the specific thresholds varied among the counties. Criteria included steepness of slope, amount of cut/fill material being moved and distance to sensitive resources. Most counties considered "grading" as earthwork involving excavation and fill or combination of both, although specific definitions of grading vary among the Counties surveyed. In all Counties reviewed, including Santa Barbara County, routine agricultural activities such as tilling of the soil, cultivation, plowing, discing, and other agricultural practices when conducted on previously cultivated or grazed land do not require a permit, notice or review process. A permit, notice, or review process may be required when preparing previously uncultivated or grazed land for agriculture. For example, re-

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

contouring of the land, terracing, benching, or installing drainages are considered grading because they involve excavation and fill or combination of both. Some grading may be exempt provided the necessary criteria are met and the thresholds are not exceeded. San Luis Obispo County and Ventura County require a written notice prior to exempting some inland agricultural grading activities. The other four Counties surveyed do not require notification or review before allowing the grading exemption. Agricultural grading exemptions for Santa Barbara County and the six surveyed counties are summarized in the attached memo, Agricultural Grading Exemptions Report (Attachment A).

Conclusion

Based on the research, Santa Barbara County's agricultural grading exemptions and protocols are similar to those in other counties and staff does not recommend changing existing protocols or requiring County verification for agricultural grading exemptions.

Fiscal Analysis:

The cost for the preparation of this report is budgeted in the Agricultural Planning program on Page D-326 of the adopted 2011–2012 fiscal year budget. There are no fees or facilities impacts associated with this project.

Special Instructions: The Clerk of the Board shall forward a copy of the Minute Order to the Planning & Development Department, Attention: Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planning.

Authored by:

Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planner

Attachments: Agricultural Grading Exemptions Report (Attachment A)