



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 27, 2017

Joan Hartmann, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Short Term Rentals

Dear Chair Hartmann and Honorable Members of the Board:

On September 6, 2017 the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) received a written P&D Director's Report indicating that the Board intends to consider allowing homestays on AG-1 or residential properties and farmstays on AG-II properties, but limiting short term rentals (STRs) to zones where other types of visitor serving accommodations are currently allowed and to areas in which vacation rentals have been historically located. While the AAC appreciates this consideration of homestays and farmstays on agricultural properties, we would also like to express (1) support of allowing STRs on AG-I and AG-II properties and (2) disagreement with the position that STRs are not a compatible use on contracted lands.

First, the AAC supports allowing STRs (as well as homestays and/or farmstays) on AG-I and AG-II properties because of the importance of a supplementary revenue stream to many agricultural operations in the county. Many ag operations, particularly smaller ones, struggle to remain viable in Santa Barbara County, in part because of exceedingly high land costs, and this is one tangible way that the Board could help ensure their continued existence, which is arguably a benefit not just to the owners but to the county as a whole.

Second, the AAC believes that STRs can, in many cases, be a compatible use on contracted lands. According to the Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee letter to the Board dated February 8, 2016, land enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program "must be principally used for commercial agriculture, and ...compatible activities should be supportive to that agriculture"(emphasis added). It is our view that if the property is in fact used principally for agriculture, and the STR use is subordinate to that principal use, then the STRs would not violate that imperative. As for the suggestion that the use "should be supportive of agriculture" it is the view of the AAC that having some amount of supplemental income generated by these STRs would, in many cases, be highly supportive in the most practical sense of the property's agricultural use.

While we do understand that there may be competing interests in different parts of the County and that the character of agriculturally zoned land can vary in different districts, we believe that the resulting concerns can be best addressed in the isolated incidents in which they may occur by imposing objective standards for potentially problematic issues (for example, by utilizing the previously suggested Good Neighbor Policy), rather than by imposing broad-brush prohibitions on this potential supplemental income for owners of agricultural properties.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Sincerely,



Paul Van Leer
Chair, Agricultural Advisory Committee

Committee Members

Bradley Miles
Ron Caird
Sharyne Merritt
AJ Cisney
Randy Sharer
Wilja Happe
Claire Wineman
Paul Van Leer, Chair
June Van Wingerden
Brook Williams
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Representing

1st District Supervisor, Das Williams
2nd District Supervisor, Janet Wolf
3rd District Supervisor, Joan Hartmann
4th District Supervisor, Peter Adam
5th District Supervisor, Steve Lavagnino
California Women for Agriculture
Grower-Shipper Association of SB and SLO Counties
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau
Santa Barbara Flower & Nursery Growers' Association
Santa Barbara Vintners
Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Assn.
California Strawberry Commission