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March 13, 2009

Supervisor Joe Centeno, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

*Santa Ynez
Valley Alliance*

Re: 2009 -2010 Annual Work Program for Land Use Planning

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Honorable Chair Centeno and Members of the Board,

The mission of the Valley Alliance is to work collaboratively with individuals, groups and governments to protect the rural character of the Santa Ynez Valley and support good stewardship of natural and agricultural resources through education, comprehensive planning and public participation.

Santa Ynez residents who support comprehensive planning, education and public participation, however, are alarmed to see the woefully inadequate funding allocated to complete the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan. After eight years of work citizens can finally see "the light at the end of the tunnel" but are alarmed to see that the County has not budgeted the resources to get us there.

Of the 9 current Long Range Planning projects illustrated in Table 1, the Santa Ynez Community Plan ranks 8th in funding. Many of the projects receiving greater funding are for areas that already have community plans, some of them recently adopted. Less than a quarter (0.22) FTE is simply insufficient to support the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors hearings necessary to consider the plan, hear public testimony, and provide the staff time necessary for adoption.

Inadequate funding to support adoption is a betrayal of the community and a recipe for failure. The reorganization of Comprehensive Planning and turnover of County staff during the plans processing has been counterproductive. The County needs to complete this process so it can undertake new projects, but it will require both staff and funds to insure success. Anything less, puts at risk the innumerable volunteer hours and substantial amount of funding that has already been directed to the Santa Ynez Community Plan.

The Santa Ynez Valley Alliance supports many of the long range planning projects before you but respectfully requests that the Board of Supervisors provide the necessary funding to successfully complete the Santa Ynez Community Plan and shine a clear light on our community's future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Oliver, President