

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - SBC Farm Bureau

1

From: SBC Farm Bureau <farmsbc@hwy246.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 3:38 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Brodiaea Inc. / North Fork Ranch Frost Pond Project
Attachments: Brodiaea frost pond reservoir Board of Supervisors appeal letter 10-2-23-2.doc

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Good Afternoon,

Attached is a letter in reference to Brodiaea Inc./ North Fork Ranch Frost Pond project to be distributed to the Board of Supervisors.

My Best,

Teri Bontrager

Executive Director
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau
805/688-7479 – Office
805/698-0723 - Cell



Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

Via email
sbccob@countyofsb.org

October 2, 2023

Honorable Dos Williams, Chair
County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101

Re: Brodiaea Inc. / North Fork Ranch Frost Pond Project

Chairman Williams:

The Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, a nonprofit California corporation representing approximately 500 agricultural and associate members in Santa Barbara County, support the construction and use of 3 agricultural frost pond/ reservoirs on the North Fork Vineyard, located near the western end of the Cuyama Valley.

Brodiaea Inc, received a Zoning Administrator hearing after a 20-month permit and environmental review process in 2017. The Zoning Administrator found the construction of the three reservoirs met all county standards. The Zoning Administrator approved the CEQA Mitigated Negative declaration, including a determination the construction of the reservoirs fell beneath the threshold of significance for water use. The Zoning Administrator concurred with County Staff's determination that agricultural water use and the associated development of wells, as exempt activities and are not considered a "project" under CEQA.

The reservoir installation decision by the Zoning administrator was appealed to the Planning Commission who voted to instruct staff to prepare a focused EIR evaluating water use. The EIR process took five years to complete and found that the ponds could be built with mitigation measures that would insure the integrity of the existing environment, including the groundwater basin. The Planning Commission ultimately denied the discretionary permit for the construction of the frost ponds.

We strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to reverse the decision by the Planning Commission, approve the Conditional Use permit and allow the construction of three water storage frost ponds/reservoirs located in an existing vineyard approximately 9 miles west of New Cuyama.

Reservoirs and frost/protection ponds are and historically have been an integral part of irrigated agriculture here in Santa Barbara County as well as the State. The groundwater basin where the vineyards are located is managed by the local groundwater sustainability agency under SGMA, which has an approved groundwater sustainability plan in place for basin and approved by the Department of Water Resources. The local groundwater sustainability agency is the appropriate entity to manage groundwater. The County permitting process should not be tied to the management of groundwater basins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheldon Bosio'.

Sheldon Bosio, President.
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau