

January 9, 2016

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
511 East Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, CA 93455

RE: HOOP HOUSES

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for not passing the proposal to allow giant plastic covered "hoop" houses in our County at your recent meeting.

Supervisor Adams, who is suppose to be representing us, said in the Santa Maria Times, that no one opposes the hoop houses. We would like to tell you that is simply NOT true and that the majority of the Lake Marie residence DO oppose the building of hoop houses. We were not at the meeting to oppose this proposal because we were never informed of the meeting or of the fact that the row crop farmers in our area planned to put 60 acres of these unsightly and unregulated plastic covered "hoop" houses directly next to our neighborhood in Lake Maria Estates.

We would like to make the following important points:

1. I have talked to many of my neighbors and we ALL OPPOSE the "hoop houses". In fact we believe that there should be an ordinance that does not allow "hoop" houses close to any residential neighborhoods. However, it should be pointed out that we do not oppose agriculture in general and in fact, value the rich history and economic strength that agriculture has given the Santa Maria Valley. What we do oppose is this fast, uncontrolled growth of "hoop" houses so close to a residential neighborhood. It should be noted that Lake Maria Estates was developed as a residential neighborhood back in the early 1960's, long before any of the surrounding area was used for intensive row crop farming. For this reason, if the County intends to significantly change the nature of this residential area, it should be required to notified the Lake Maria residents of any supervisors' meetings that would impact our environment and potentially our home values. To date, notifications of meetings have not been given to us.

2. A major issue is the size of the "hoop" structures. We have been told that a county regulation already exist that limits the hoop farming structure's height to 12 feet. Many

of the existing structures in the valley are NOT in compliance with the 12 foot limit and thus illegal. Has the county done anything to prevent the regulations being violated at the expense of other property owners' rights? It seem to us that all "hoop" structures over 12 feet should be forced to be lowered or removed.

We have been told that some of the farmers intend to have "hoop" houses that could exceed 36 of even 40 feet. That would be like placing a 3 story building next to residential property in some locations, not to mention that the 3 story structure might cover 60 acres - picture a huge district Wal-Mart warehouse next door to your home. It would take a great deal of time and money for these farmers to legitimately go through the planning department, building department, and the environmental impact work that would be necessary to get a legal permit to construct a "green house" of that size. It appears that the row crop farmers are using the guise of putting up these temporary "hoop" houses in order for them to circumvent all the zoning and building regulations required of any structure, including a "green house" of that size. Why are they being allowed to go around the County's permitting regulations in this way?

3. Another concern is the change to on and off-site water management and flood control issues. Covering acreage with plastic covered hoops will likely create more water running off the farmed properties, which could result in flooding of adjacent parcels and residential properties. On-site water absorption back into our precious water basin would also be disturbed and thwarted by the plastic roofs. These are issues that would be addressed if the "hoop" houses were treated under regulations used for "green houses". While the "hoops" are considered "temporary," they are not. In a typical two year time frame the repeated use after brief crop rotation will mean the environmental impacts would be similar to "permanent" green house structures. Again, it appears that, the hoop structures are being used to circumvent all the zoning, building regulations, and environmental safety required of "green house" operations.

4. In addition, we have serious concerns about the impact of the hoop structures along the northern end of the Santa Barbara County Wine Trail. We wish to preserve and encourage tourism that will enhance the economic future of our county. The proposed structures will create unsightly impacts on the nearby wineries that are making major contributions to our economic future.

5. Homeowners are also facing a direct economic impact from the oversized and inappropriate hoop structures being proposed. Who wants to have a view of a 2 or 3 story white plastic green house from their home? Our home values would be in serious jeopardy if these structures were to be a allowed adjacent to our neighborhood. We would appreciate the same consideration that county government has given to businesses and homeowners in intensive "green house" farming areas such as Carpinteria, where serious impacts have been mitigated.

We are requesting that you pass rules to keep the regular "hoop houses" away from residential homes and neighborhoods of your constituents who live close to farm fields. These structures impact our views, create potential flooding issues, and have NOT been held to the standards of "green house" farming. They are not truly temporary and if they crowd up against our subdivision (or others), they will dramatically reduce the value of our homes. "Hoops" might be acceptable in remote areas where they are not so directly impacting existing residential homes; but even then appropriate environmental issues should be addressed for the benefit of everyone in the county.

Please save our neighborhood and other neighborhoods like ours from the negative impacts on the quality of our lives as well as potential flooding and severe financial loss in the value of our homes. It is also important to the economic health of the Santa Maria Valley that you save the tourist appeal and wine industry of our County, by setting sensible rules for "hoop" house farming.

Sincerely,



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