

March 16, 2026

Chair Chris Lopez
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
PO Box 1728
Salinas, CA 93902

RE: Item 16: Receive a preliminary analysis in response to Board Referral No. 2026.01 (Daniels)

Dear Chair and Board of Supervisors Members:

LandWatch supports County efforts to explore different funding options for affordable housing. For this reason, we request that the Board of Supervisors vote in favor of Board Referral No. 2026.01, currently worded as to “explore the feasibility of implementing a local real estate transfer tax on high-value property sales in unincorporated Monterey County to create a local housing fund for home development in relative proximity to those transactions.”

We do, however, encourage the Board to consider the following factors with regard to implementing a transfer tax:

1. **Provide affordable and missing middle housing and do so County-wide.** The provision of housing should be County-wide and the program should focus on affordable and missing middle housing. Accordingly, we suggest that the referral be revised to “explore the feasibility of implementing a local real estate transfer tax on high-value property sales in unincorporated Monterey County to create a fund for development of lower and moderate income housing and workforce housing throughout the County.”
2. **Ensure accountability.** The County must include mechanisms for accountability, ensuring that the money is spent in ways to which the County has committed and that the County has a transparent process to allocate the money. As a model, the County should consider a citizen oversight committee similar to the one established by the Transportation Safety & Investment Plan, Measure X on the November 8, 2016 ballot. Measure X was approved with 67.7% approval from Monterey County voters in part because of this important public process for accountability.

3. **Establish objective criteria.** The County must have objective criteria for how money will be spent. Specifically, the County must commit to funding the right kind of housing in the right locations. This should include (1) housing on identified opportunity sites in the unincorporated area with adequate infrastructure and high TCAC scores; (2) housing in community areas and other unincorporated areas that will affirmatively further fair housing; and (3) high density infill housing in incorporated communities with unmet needs for affordable housing.
4. **Lower the taxable threshold.** LandWatch joins MBEP in requesting that the County consider lowering the proposed threshold of \$10M to \$5M or other levels that would increase the size of the revenue measure and achieve significantly more impact.

LandWatch commends the County for taking steps to ensure that affordable housing will not only be facilitated through the planning process, but will also have funding sources. This is a key component to meeting the County's housing needs.

Supervisor Daniel's referral is a crucial step in addressing community housing needs throughout the County. Supervisors who support housing for our local communities and housing for Monterey County's workforce should vote in favor.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael DeLapa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "DeLapa" clearly distinguishable.

Michael DeLapa
Executive Director