

LandWatch and Other Organizations Settle With County on Attorney's Fees

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors and a coalition of local environmental organizations have reached agreement covering the costs and legal fees incurred by the organizations in connection with last year's litigation over the placement of the Community General Plan Initiative (Measure A) and the Rancho San Juan Referendum on the June 2007 ballot. In February 2007, United States District Court Judge Ware ruled that the federal Voting Rights Act did not require the petitions for the two ballot measures to be circulated in Spanish as well as English. Judge Ware subsequently ordered the County to pay the legal fees incurred by the plaintiffs in their lawsuits seeking to have the initiative and referendum submitted to the voters. In the settlement, the County agreed to pay the attorneys for LandWatch Monterey County, Citizens for Responsible Growth, the Rancho San Juan Opposition Coalition, and four individual plaintiffs a total of \$500,000 in fees and expenses resulting from the litigation.

"We are pleased to put this issue behind us" said Michael DeLapa, President of the LandWatch Board of Directors. "We look forward to continuing our work with the County to shape responsible land use policies in the best interest of Monterey County as a whole.

Supervisor Dave Potter, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, added, "The County appreciates the principled positions taken by all parties in the case to protect both voting rights and the California initiative process. We look forward to working cooperatively to accomplish these worthy goals."