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July 19, 2012

Dave Potter, Chair  
Monterey County Board of Supervisors  
168 West Alisal St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

**SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) BETWEEN CITY OF  
GONZALES AND COUNTY OF MONTEREY**

Dear Chair Potter and Members of the Board:

LandWatch was informed that this item was pulled from the July 24<sup>th</sup> agenda; however, we are submitting our comments hoping that they will be helpful in the continuing negotiations between the County and the city of Gonzales. After carefully reviewing the proposed MOA and Government Code Section 56425, we recommend that you address the following issues:

1. Significant differences about the area to be included in the Sphere of Influence remain with the County recommending 900 new acres and the City recommending over 2,100 new acres. We think the County and City should continue to work on this issue using the guidelines that LAFCO would follow (Section 56425 (e) (1-5). Also to be considered should be pending AMBAG population forecasts which may show a decline in forecasted population for Salinas Valley cities. We note that 630 units have already been approved and are unconstructed within the City, which decreases the urgency of a decision. Those units alone could accommodate a population of 2,600 people (assumes 4 persons/DU).
2. The MOA references the County's Agricultural Land Mitigation Program indicating that for purposes of the MOA, the County's program will be satisfied if the City can prove to the County that land immediately adjacent to the City's northern, western and southern boundaries have been permanently secured by the recordation of an agricultural preservation easement or through the sale or dedication of land to a private land trust. This provision is premature since the County has yet to develop and adopt an Agricultural Land Mitigation Program pursuant to AG-1.12 of the adopted County General Plan.
3. Finally, we note that Government Code Section 56425 (b) states that an agreement should include agreement on "development standards and planning and zoning requirements

within the sphere to ensure that development within the sphere occurs in a manner that reflects the concerns of the affected city and is accomplished in a manner that promotes the logical and orderly development of areas within the sphere.” We think the MOA should be refined to more specifically address “development standards and planning and zoning requirements”. For example, the MOA provides that specific plans shall “include residential densities that ensure a compact urban form that helps protect agricultural land from premature conservation”. P.3. The MOA should specify zoning that would accomplish a “compact urban form”.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy L. White', written in a cursive style.

Amy L. White  
Executive Director