



LandWatch
monterey county

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Butch Lindley, Chair
[Sent By Email]
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

RE: Interim Ordinance limiting development on properties designated as part of the Area of Development Concentration in the 1986 Greater Salinas Area Plan; and

Adoption of Rancho San Juan Revised Specific Plan (GPZ050005).

Dear Chairman Lindley and Board Members:

The Interim Ordinance before you today includes the following finding concerning the area designated in the Greater Salinas Area Plan:

There is a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare, and approval of tentative and parcel maps and discretionary development permits during the Board of Supervisor's study and consideration of appropriate General Plan, Area Plan, and zoning ordinance amendments, *except as provided herein*, would result in such threat to public health, safety, and welfare. (emphasis added)

Threats to the public health, safety, and welfare are serious matters. The public deserves to know what they are, but the proposed ordinance does not identify these threats! Does further development in the Greater Salinas Area threaten the supply of safe drinking water? Does further development threaten our ability to manage sewage treatment systems? Will the additional traffic brought on by more development create a significant threat to public safety?

The Interim Ordinance asserts that continued development in the area designated in the Greater Salinas Area Plan poses unidentified threats to the public health, safety, and welfare, but there is an exception to the impact of these unidentified threats, namely the development of the H-Y-H Corporation Butterfly Village Project Property. Somehow, development of Butterfly Village is not a potential threat, but development everywhere else in this area is.

Passing this ordinance as it now reads constitutes a flagrant act of irresponsibility and favoritism. If there are threats to the public health, safety, and welfare, the County needs to be specific about what they are. The County also needs to make clear why development of Butterfly Village does not pose the same threats. Passing this ordinance without clarifying these issues is the same kind of irresponsible decision-making that got the County into trouble with Rancho San Juan in the

first place. It is not fair to delay the development approval process arbitrarily, and it invites litigation. The County should move projects through the approval process and if the projects are not in the public interest, the Board should deny them! One measure of whether or not a project is in the public interest is the kind of General Plan amendments it requires.

Adoption of the Rancho San Juan Revised Specific Plan (GPZ050005) requires amendments to policies in the General Plan intended to ensure there are no significant unmitigated impacts of traffic circulation and to protect the viability of farming on neighboring properties. These protections afforded by the General Plan are important, and the public doesn't want them dismissed or weakened.

Adoption of the "revised" project the day before the public gets to vote on the original Rancho San Juan General Plan amendments represents an act of gargantuan arrogance. Although the revised project is smaller, it requires the same General Plan amendments, the same broken promises that accompanied the approval of the original project. If this were not bad enough, the General Plan amendments for the revised project are much worse than the original amendments. While the original amendments applied only to the Rancho San Juan Specific Plan Area, the revised amendments apply throughout the County, wherever a Specific Plan is approved!

This is egregious land use planning. Approving this development under these circumstances is completely irresponsible. Doing so the day before the citizens get to vote makes this irresponsible decision an act of supreme arrogance as well. If the Board goes forward with this decision, it will prove once again that, when it comes to land use, Monterey County government is broken!

Sincerely,

Chris Fitz, Executive Director
LandWatch Monterey County