

February 19, 2016

Leroy Smith, County Counsel
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

RE: Initiative Proposing Amendments to the Ventura County General Plan

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am one of the proponents of the proposed initiative measure filed on February 19, 2016, requesting that Title and Summary be prepared in connection with the measure. Pursuant to Elections Code section 9105, the County Counsel is charged with preparing the Title and Summary within 15 days of the date the measure was filed. In 500 words or less, the Title and Summary must be a "true and impartial statement of the purpose of the proposed measure in such language that the ballot title shall neither be an argument, nor be likely to create prejudice, for or against the proposed measure." (Elec. Code § 9105(a).) Due to the length and complexity of the initiative measure and the short period of time provided for preparing the Title and Summary, we respectfully submit this letter to propose language for your consideration in preparing the Title and Summary.

As you know, state law requires that each county and city adopt a "comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning." (Gov. Code § 65300.) Pursuant to state law, Ventura County's general plan indeed consists of a statement of development policies, objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals. In addition to periodic amendments by the Board of Supervisors, the General Plan was amended by voters to require voter approval for certain future proposed changes to agricultural, open space and rural land use designations, until December 31, 2020.

Our initiative proposal would extend the voter approval requirement to 2036, with some modifications intended to preserve and nurture the agricultural land uses in the County. In particular, our initiative would emphasize as goals:

- expanded agricultural water infrastructure
- construction of farmworker housing near farms and fields
- allow processing of locally grown foods on limited lands

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County Clerk and Recorder

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- permit redesignation of agricultural lands near public school sites to uses that alleviate the concerns of dust, noise and pest control
- encourage local composting of agricultural materials
- promote scientific and educational research facilities that focus on local agriculture
- encourage Land Conservation Act contracts on farming, grazing and open space lands
- modify land use designations for Thomas Aquinas College

In light of these major components of the initiative measure, we propose the following Title and Summary:

MEASURE TO EXTEND FROM 2020 THROUGH 2036 THE REQUIREMENT THAT CHANGES TO COUNTY'S GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS, GOALS AND POLICIES FOR OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURAL, AND RURAL LANDS IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA BE APPROVED BY A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE INCLUDING NEW AND REVISED GOALS AND POLICIES PERTAINING TO SUSTAINED UTILIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

Currently, the County of Ventura's General Plan requires that changes to land use designations, goals and policies regarding open space, agricultural, and rural lands in the unincorporated area (lands outside city boundaries) be approved by a vote of the people at a countywide election, with limited exceptions. Those provisions are set to expire December 31, 2020. This measure, if adopted by the voters of the County, would extend the voter approval requirement through 2036, and make certain other changes to the General Plan.

The limited exceptions from the general rule of voter approval include changes to land use designations that would result in non-urbanized uses, redesignations necessary to avoid an unlawful taking of private property, and certain others.

In addition to extending the core voter approval requirements of the current General Plan through 2036, the measure would make the following changes to the General Plan, among others: (1) eliminate voter approval requirements for redesignations needed to comply with state housing laws for all economic segments of the community; (2) eliminate voter approval requirements for redesignations of up to 225 acres of land countywide for processing of locally grown foods; (3) add goal to promote infrastructure for water and farmworker housing; (4) add goal to encourage local composting and re-use of agricultural materials; (5) add goal to develop agricultural permit processing procedures that are rapid and efficient; (6) add goal to

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encourage scientific and educational research facilities that focus on local agriculture to be located in Ventura County; (7) eliminate voter approval requirements for redesignations of agricultural parcels adjacent to public schools that are also adjacent to a city; (8) add goal to encourage Land Conservation Act contracts on farming, grazing and open space lands; (9) designate Thomas Aquinas College as an Existing Community; and (10) amend Existing Community policies by expanding the types of zones that can be recognized beyond residential, commercial or industrial.

The measure's provisions, if approved by the voters, would remain in effect through 2036, unless amended or repealed earlier by the voters. After December 31, 2036, any General Plan changes may be made without a vote of the people.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to receiving the final Title and Summary and moving forward with this process.

Very truly yours,

Patsy Diane Waters
Proponent

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