



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA**

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800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

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May 19, 2015

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Supervisors Bennett and Long to Approve a One Time Appropriation of \$1-million in Matching Funds for the Construction of Farmworker Housing in Ventura County.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Direct the CEO's office to include a one-time appropriation of \$1 million in the FY 2015-16 budget for use as a one-time expenditure of matching funds to build farmworker housing in Ventura County. Funding will be available on a first come, first served basis and will be allocated by the CEO, with the approval of this Board, until the total \$1 million in allocated funds for this program is exhausted.
2. Direct the CEO to develop criteria and guidelines for allocating the funding, including developing proper safeguards to ensure that funding will only serve farmworkers and will assure long-term farmworker housing.
3. Direct the CEO to analyze whether to administer the funds internally or through a contract with an external organization.
4. Direct the CEO to return to our Board with his recommendations.

DISCUSSION:

Nearly 23,000 men and women are employed working on farms and ranches in Ventura County. These workers are vital to the success of the County's \$2 billion per year agricultural industry.

The average income of a Ventura County farm worker is \$22,000 per year. Yet, with Ventura County topping nationwide rent increases with rents for all types of units up 5.7% from a year earlier, families need to earn \$49,337 per year to qualify for a one-bedroom apartment at the average countywide price of \$1,438 per month.

This has forced many farm workers and their families to double- and triple-up in housing, resulting in overcrowded living conditions and the stress, compromised health, and poor school performance that often accompanies overcrowding.

It is not morally acceptable for these critically-needed workers to be forced to live in overcrowded conditions, garages, or other buildings not designed for human habitation.

On September 9, 2014 our Board made a commitment to policies that support the working poor. Therefore, it is appropriate for our Board to encourage and support individuals and organizations who are willing to build the housing that will help ensure farm worker families have access to safe and affordable housing.

Safe, affordable housing for our Ventura County farm workers benefits everyone. Adequate housing reduces health care and social costs, improves educational performance, helps assure sufficient employees for the local economy, and relieves pressure on scarce low-income housing.

Thank you for your support of our important agricultural business economy and also improving the quality of life for the farm workers whose labor contributes so much to Ventura County agriculture's economic success.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District



Kathy I. Long
Supervisor, Third District