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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF VENTURA

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800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

March 7, 2006

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Direction to Planning staff to process and return to the Board with a new General Plan Goal and Policy regarding agricultural sustainability in the Open Space designation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Direct staff to prepare and process and return to the Board with a General Plan Amendment to adopt the following new goal and policy:

Add new Goal #3.1.2-5 (7):

Protect the agricultural productivity of Open Space lands and support long-term agricultural sustainability countywide.

Add new policy # 3.2.-5 (8)

Rezoning from a subzone with a minimum parcel size of 20 acres or more to a zone with less than 20-acre minimum parcel size shall be allowed only where it is found that there would be no significant effect upon agriculture and county agricultural sustainability.

DISCUSSION:

At our February 28 Board hearing on the General Plan, testimony was provided by Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee members regarding the fact that Open Space lands contain substantial agricultural production. While the APAC members reversed their initial support for increasing the mandatory minimum parcel size from 10 acres to 20 acres, they underscored the importance of agricultural productivity on Open Space lands. They noted that not all open space lands are suitable for agriculture, and that certain agricultural activities could be sustained on 10-acre parcels.

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County Land Conservation Act (LCA) statistics demonstrate the agricultural importance of Open Space designated lands. Of a total of 131,287 acres in LCA contracts countywide, 84,313 of these acres are within the Open Space designation. In order to address the need to preserve agriculture without rezoning Open Space lands to 20-acre minimum lot size, adoption of the recommended Open Space Goal and Policy will help assure agricultural sustainability on Open Space designated lands.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District



Linda Parks
Supervisor, Second District