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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA
GOVERNMENT CENTER, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

June 12, 2007

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

SUBJECT: DIRECTION TO RMA TO PREPARE A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL RIDGELINE PROTECTION PROGRAMS IN THE OJAI VALLEY AND STRENGTHEN RIDGELINE PROTECTION MEASURES FOR VENTU PARK'S SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY ZONE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Direct the CEO's office to coordinate funding with RMA and direct RMA to prepare a General Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment to apply the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone to additional ridgelines in the Ojai Valley and prepare additional ridgeline protection measures for Ventu Park, and to return the amendments to the Board of Supervisors for approval following appropriate public review.

FISCAL IMPACT:
Estimated cost for the 07-08 year: $60,000

DISCUSSION:

Last week, the RMA Planning Division completed a major effort on the farmland buffer ordinance. The RMA also presented us with information concerning their two major priorities for the 2007-08 fiscal year, the completion of the new Housing Element and new Building Codes. From time-to-time the Board has identified projects we wish RMA to prioritize.

We are requesting that the Board add a third priority for 2007-08, work on the above mentioned ridgeline ordinances. We have been waiting for years to begin work on these two projects. With each passing year, there becomes less and less ridgeline value to protect. Consequently, a one-time expenditure to address this issue is necessary at this time.

Recycled Paper

The County General Plan recognizes the need to protect scenic vistas, and accordingly, the General Plan includes ridgeline protection programs in the Ojai Valley and Thousand Oaks Area Plans. However, the Ojai plan only applied the protections to major ridgelines forming the skyline of the valleys, and not to subordinate ridges that are often equally prominent to the communities below. In Ventu Park, ridgeline development on prominent ridges has continued to occur. Consequently, a steady march of development on these mid-level ridges has occurred, much to the dismay of citizens who had expected ridges to be protected.

Protection of ridgelines requires that regulations be put into place before development occurs. Even one or two oversized and insensitively sited homes can destroy the scenic qualities of a ridgeline. The Ojai Valley and Ventu Park areas have been experiencing ridgeline development and planned development that threatens to permanently destroy the scenic resources of these communities. If we are to preserve the scenic resources of these communities, we must act promptly to put protections into place.

The recommended action would direct RMA to proceed with extending existing ridgeline protections to additional ridges in the Ojai Valley Area Plan and develop additional measures that strengthen the ridgeline protection measures in the existing Scenic Resource Protection overlay zone in Ventu Park. The CEO's office is directed to work with RMA to make budget adjustments as needed during the 07-08 fiscal year.

Cordially,

Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District

Linda Parks
Supervisor, Second District