



SACRAMENTO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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CITY OF ELK GROVE
PLANNING

December 2, 2009

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Suite, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 12/2/09 Board of Supervisor meeting, agenda item # 11
ELK GROVE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE DRAFT MOU & JOINT VISION PRESENTATION

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Board of Supervisors,

The purpose of this letter is to serve as written testimony to today's presentation on the City of Elk Grove Sphere of Influence draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Joint Vision between the County and City.

Sacramento County Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) recognizes the need for the City of Elk Grove to accommodate for future growth and will support Sphere of Influence (SOI) changes when credible, realistic growth projections determine that expansion is necessary. Any expansion must occur after infill and revitalization projects are taken into account. Presently, there are 8,000 acres of undeveloped land within the current city limits. The request to expand the SOI should not be pursued until those 8,000 acres are incorporated into the long term plan and the need to expand is clearly demonstrated. The city has recently hired a consulting team to complete a market study. Part of the responsibility of this team is to determine the need of future land development to accommodate for growth based upon their findings. Farm Bureau urges the County to refrain from making any decisions of approving the MOU and Joint Vision until this study has been completed and that information is made available to the County, LAFCo and stakeholders.

Farm Bureau supports the Sacramento County General Plan with regards to preservation of agriculture and protecting it from urban sprawl. Loss of farmland has far too long been ignored or considered inconsequential as urban sprawl has expanded in the region. Agriculture contributes over \$358 million to the local economy and still remains a driving economic force to the State as we stand in the middle of a recession. The actions of Sacramento County will have lasting impacts to agriculture, not only regionally but state-wide. In a time when farmland is being lost at a rapid rate, we (local land use planners and policy making bodies) must view land planning much differently than in the past. For this alone, we urge the County to take the time to gather credible, realistic data before entering into an agreement that will permanently change the valuable working landscapes in this region.

To Represent and Promote Agriculture in Sacramento County

Farm Bureau participated in all four listening sessions and is concerned the MOU does not adequately address the issues which were raised. Those issues being:

1. Floodplain management
2. Loss of habitat
3. Impacts to natural resources
4. Inadequate infrastructure (specifically groundwater and the current overdraft of groundwater in Elk Grove)
5. Conflicts at the urban/rural edge

The Cosumnes River/Deer Creek floodplain and agricultural operations should continue to be governed by Sacramento County for the benefit of all citizens of the region. The floodplain is regionally important and therefore should be governed by an experienced body that has policies and departments in place that protect, service and enhance agricultural operations.

Furthermore, the draft MOU and Joint Vision provides for public access trails within the Cosumnes River/Deer Creek area. Farm Bureau is very concerned about public access and impacts to agricultural operations which will further expand the urban/rural edge conflicts. In addition, transitional land uses to reduce urban/rural edge conflicts should occur inside any SOI boundary, to reduce any further impacts to neighboring agricultural operations.

Land use planning is more critical today than it ever has been in the past. We appreciate your time and thoughtful consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Russell van Loben Sels, President
Sacramento County Farm Bureau

cc. City of Elk Grove Council Members
LAFCo Board of Directors
Taro Echiburu, City of Elk Grove
Peter Brundage, LAFCo