

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 23, 2011
TO: LAFCO Commissioners
FROM:  Marjorie Blom, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION POLICY WORKSHOP**

At your January 26th meeting, the Commission discussed how to proceed with updating its agricultural land preservation policies. During the meeting, it was noted that the Stanislaus County Mayors Group has been discussing regional growth strategies, which may include similar goals. The Commission directed Staff to send a letter to the Mayors Group inviting the Mayors to attend tonight's workshop. (See attached, Exhibit 1.)

On March 11, 2011, your Legal Counsel and Staff received a letter signed by all nine City Mayors requesting "that the workshop and discussion of agricultural land preservation policies be continued for three months." (See attached, Exhibit 2.)

At this time, the Commission may continue its discussion regarding agricultural land preservation policies, or direct Staff to reschedule a workshop in three months (June 22, 2011) in order to accommodate the Mayors Group.

In addition, at the Commission's request, Staff would also be prepared to develop draft evaluation standards to be utilized by the Commission when reviewing proposals with respect to agricultural and/or open space lands, consistent with current policies. (See attached "Policy 2B", Exhibit 3.)

cc: Dean Wright, LAFCO Counsel
County Mayors Group

Attachments: 1. Letter from the Stanislaus County Mayors, dated March 9, 2011
2. LAFCO Letter to Mayors Group, dated January 28, 2011
3. LAFCO Policy Excerpts Regarding Agricultural and Open-Space Lands

STANISLAUS COUNTY MAYORS

Post Office Box 642, Modesto, CA 95353

RECEIVED
COUNTY COUNSEL

2011 MAR 11 A 8:13

DATE: March 9, 2011

TO: Dean Wright, LAFCO Legal Counsel
Marjorie Blom, LAFCO Executive Director

FROM: Stanislaus County Mayors

RE: Invitation to Attend LAFCO Workshop Regarding Agricultural Land
Preservation Policies

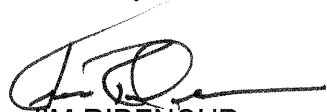
We received your invitation to attend the LAFCO Workshop scheduled on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 regarding agricultural land preservation policies.

Because of scheduling issues, some of us are unable to attend. Therefore, we respectfully request that the workshop and discussion of agricultural land preservation policies be continued for three months.

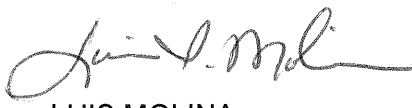
As you know, the Stanislaus County Mayors have discussed the development of a Stanislaus Growth Management Plan and we certainly appreciate the invitation and opportunity to discuss the preservation of agricultural land with LAFCO members.

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Sincerely,



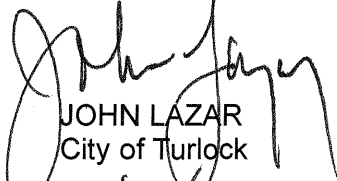
JIM RIDENOUR
City of Modesto



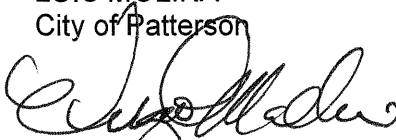
LUIS MOLINA
City of Patterson



PAT PAUL
City of Oakdale



JOHN LAZAR
City of Turlock



VIRGINIA MADUENO
City of Riverbank



CHARLES GOEKEN
City of Waterford



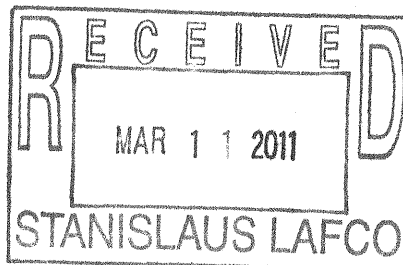
ED KATEN
City of Newman



CHRIS VIERRA
City of Ceres



RAMON BAWANAN
City of Hughson



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MODESTO, CA 95354



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HAND DELIVERED TO MAYOR RIDENOUR TO DISTRIBUTE TO MAYOR'S GROUP

DATE: January 28, 2011

TO: Jim Ridenour, Mayor, City of Modesto &
Chair of the Stanislaus County Mayor's Group

FROM: Dean Wright, LAFCO Legal Counsel
Marjorie Blom, LAFCO Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Invitation to Attend a LAFCO Workshop Regarding Agricultural Land
Preservation Policies

At the request of the Stanislaus Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the Stanislaus County Mayor's Group is cordially invited to attend a workshop regarding agricultural land preservation policies. The Workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, beginning at 6:00 pm., at the 10th Street Place, Basement Chambers, 1010 10th Street, Modesto.

At their meeting on January 26, 2011, LAFCO Commissioner Charlie Goeken, Mayor of Waterford, indicated that the Mayor's within the County have been discussing regional growth strategies, which may include goals relating to the preservation of agricultural land and open space resources.

Please find attached, the December 1, 2010 LAFCO agenda item regarding this subject, which also includes excerpts from existing Stanislaus LAFCO policies, and also policies which have been adopted by other LAFCO's in California.

Sincerely,



Dean Wright
LAFCO Legal Counsel



Marjorie Blom
LAFCO Executive Officer

Attachment
cc: LAFCO Commissioners

Excerpts from the Stanislaus LAFCO Policies and Procedures Manual (Amended June 23, 2010) Regarding Agricultural and Open-Space Lands

IV. GENERAL POWERS AND POLICY GUIDELINES

Policy 1 – Purpose (Page 29). The purposes of the Local Agency Formation Commission are provided by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, and include the following:

1. To encourage planned, well-ordered, efficient development patterns.
2. To encourage efficient and effective delivery of governmental services by the agencies who provide those services.
3. **To encourage urban land use patterns which balance urban growth with the conservation of open space and prime agricultural lands.**
4. To encourage the cities and the County to plan urban land use patterns which include a harmony between housing for residents and jobs provided by commercial and urban development.

Policy 2 – Powers (Pages 29/30). The powers of LAFCO include the following:

- B. Adopt Evaluation Standards and procedures for the evaluation of proposals which shall include, but are not limited to, the following factors identified in Government Code Section 56668:
 - e) The effect of the proposal on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands, as defined by Section 56016.
- H. Open Space – It is the intent of the Legislature that Commission establish policies and exercise their powers so as to encourage and provide planned, well ordered, efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open space lands within such patterns. (Government Code Section 56001.)

Policy 21 (Pages 42/43) – Development of Vacant or Underutilized Land Prior to Annexation of Additional Territory. The following shall be considered with regards to development of vacant or underutilized land prior to annexation of additional territory:

- A. Development of existing vacant non-open space, and non-prime agricultural land within an agency's boundaries is encouraged prior to further annexation and development.
- B. Annexation proposals to cities or districts providing urban services of undeveloped or agricultural parcels shall show: that urban development is imminent for all or a substantial portion of the proposal area; that urban development will be contiguous with existing or proposed development; and that a planned, orderly, and compact urban development pattern will result. Proposals resulting in leapfrog, non-contiguous urban development patterns shall not be approved.

Excerpts from the Stanislaus LAFCO Policies and Procedures Manual (Amended June 23, 2010) regarding Agricultural and Open-Space Lands – Continued

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Factors for Consideration (Page 45):

1. The present and probable land uses within the area, including agricultural and open space lands.

Statement of Intent for Spheres of Influence (Pages 50/51):

5. Sphere of Influence boundaries shall, to the extent possible, maintain a separation between existing communities to protect open space and agricultural lands and the identity of an individual community.
6. LAFCO supports and encourages the cities and Stanislaus County to adopt general plans, policies, and agreements which reflect adopted countywide populations, fair-share housing and employment projections, and will promote the Visioning Plan to grow and evolve in a compact, efficient fashion, protect farmland outside urban boundaries, and avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.

Sphere of Influence Policies (Page 52):

4. Territory not in need of urban services, including open space, agriculture, non-protested, or protested and not upheld Williamson Act contracted lands, shall not be assigned to an agency's sphere of influence, unless the area's exclusion would impede the planned, orderly and efficient development of this area.

Amendment of Spheres (Page 54):

6. Prime Agricultural Land – Amendment proposals involving Sphere expansion which contain prime agricultural land will not be approved by LAFCO if there is sufficient alternative land available for annexation within the existing Sphere of Influence.