

**East Shore Planning Group
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August 21, 2015

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903

By email to BOS@marincounty.org

**Local Coastal Program Amendments
Board of Supervisors Meeting, August 25, 2015**

Dear President Rice and members of the Board of Supervisors:

I write on behalf of the East Shore Planning Group. The East Shore Planning Group is a California not-for-profit corporation formed in 1984 that has a membership about 90 owners and tenants of residential, commercial and agricultural properties in the unincorporated area of Marin County along the east shore of Tomales Bay. ESPG is the primary local organization involved with issues of development in the area.

ESPG has been active in the formulation of the amendments to the LCP since the process began, with a particular focus on reducing permitting requirements for small agricultural retail sales facilities (“farm stands”) and small agricultural processing facilities. In this regard, we have attempted to achieve a balance between the need to support the economic viability and prosperity of agriculture in our area with the very real threat of over-commercialization of Highway 1 along Tomales Bay and the immediate area.

After years of working with the various stakeholders on these issues, we are satisfied with the recommendations of the Community Development Agency staff. To be sure, as the staff report notes in connection with retail sales provisions, “While no group may have gotten exactly what it wanted, it is staff’s understanding that there is now support for the provisions included in the Resubmittal.”

That is exactly the case with ESPG, and on that basis we support the recommendations and urge the Board of Supervisors to accept and adopt these recommendations without change. Further, if they are adopted as recommended, we will urge that the Coastal Commission approve them as well. We believe that the mainstream agricultural community is also in support of this final resolution of these important issues, so we can be united in our support of them to the Coastal Commission.

In addition, ESPG and the East Shore Community Plan strongly support agricultural activities in our area, and ranchers and farmers comprise a substantial portion of our membership. Accordingly, we are very much aware of the need for our ranchers and farmers to have flexibility with respect to their typical agricultural practices.

The Community Development Agency addresses this critical issue in their recommendations regarding “Ongoing Agriculture.” The Board of Directors of the ESGP unanimously supports the recommendations and we strongly urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt them.

We believe the proposed provisions strike a good balance between protecting the environment by requiring permits for certain activities, and giving farmers and ranchers reasonable latitude in their response to changing conditions. Technological innovation, climate change and shifts in market dynamics necessitate timely experimentation and adaptation unencumbered by the delays, costs and uncertainties inherent in the coastal permitting process.

We hope that the Board of Supervisors will agree, and we will look forward to urging the Coastal Commission to do likewise.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Lori Kyle

Lori Kyle, President