

From: Ione Conlan
Sent: Friday, January 11, 2013 2:30 PM
To: MarinLCP
Subject: January 15, BOS Meeting

Honorable Members of the Marin Board of Supervisors.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the LCP and matters concerning balancing the equities between well meaning authors & organizations proclaiming their superior wisdom notions, of "*protection of our coastal resources*" which notions they believe to be wiser than many others including but not limited to, resident farmers and ranchers whose families born and reared, have lived on these coastal lands, long before these newcomer Transplants even arrived in Marin County, or perhaps settled in because of what the old timers preserved for them.

The argument by these Transplants, is put forth that "*protection of our coastal resources*" can only be accomplished with the elimination of agriculture. Oh my goodness, they do not articulate that, in such straight forward language, Oh no.....

The subtle agenda is cloaked & presented ostensibly to "*protect our coastal resources*" and this is accomplished by creating regulations which will discourage and ultimately wipe out local food & fiber production in the coastal areas of Marin County,

But alas! Many of the farms and ranches have been in agriculture in the same family, long before these critical formulators, and transplanted well meaning folks arrived in Marin.

How will these well meaning folks accomplish wiping out Agriculture?

Well when one receives a steady comfortable paycheck, either mail box income, or a really good high paying job, with a lot of time on one's hands, armed with a large base of retired folks with a lot of letters behind their names, and members with ongoing professional business licenses,.....

... it's real easy to conjure up ways to eliminate those pesky farmers and ranchers, who have the audacity to stand up and fight for the land that has been in their families for generations, who have suffered untold personal sacrifices, to save land and water and hanging on for dear life, after multiple payments of inheritance taxes.

Now comes 24 separate "environmental associations" who have forgotten that most farmers and ranchers to survive, are truly land environmentalists, protecting their lands, crops and animals, working from sunup to sundown, conserving water and land to make a living.

These well meaning "environmentalists" sophisticated professionals, and comfortable folks are able to host a reception at the San Francisco Yacht Club, to rub elbows with our CCC Commissioners, proselytizing their own point of view from the comfortable harbor club, which I must say is always enchanting.....

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the West Marin Farmer/ Rancher, that same raining evening is sheltering his animals, putting up the chickens, feeding the piglets, working in the dairy besides his cows, and the myriad of tasks it takes to produce good healthy clean food for local consumption, and make a living for his family.

And every time he needs to make a slight customary and usual change, or an improvement on his land, it becomes a "*cause celebre*"

Now this same well meaning group would disallow from "*principally permitted use*", viticulture, crop and pasture seasonal changes, intergenerational housing, veterinary clinics, animal hospitals, churches, Bed & Breakfast, tours, practical sizes of farm stands and cheese plants, multiple intergenerational housing, requiring clustering of buildings whether appropriate or not, severely restricting the landowner's ability to diversify his land use, and to use his land to its best and highest use, to survive.

The desire to micro manage local agriculture becomes comical... "*no picnic tables at farm stands*" "*no tasting at cheese plants*" "*a double wide trailer is good enough for those farmers in West Marin*" & "*they didn't need intergenerational housing before, so why do they need it now*"... "*a farmer doesn't have to live on the farm to farm*"

Viticulture experts have stepped forward with expert testimony, which seeks to eliminate vines using the excuse of soil erosion, water preservation, etc.

Surely these sophisticated experts have traveled abroad and seen vines on terraced lands, dry farmed for high sugar content, and cannot seriously expect anyone to believe that viticulture is not viable in Marin County. The existing county local in place regulations, should not require an *additional* layer of California Coastal Commission (CCC) administration and permits.

Oh, and to drill a water well, *in addition* to the layers of local county rules, they would now have the farmer obtain an *additional* onerous permit from the CCC, additional prohibitive costs, special measures, professional reports from hydrologist, biologists, et al.

Wait a minute, there's something wrong with this picture. Today a farmer & rancher in Marin County is faced with a grave issue, which goes unnoticed.

It's called UNFAIR COMPETITION. Land is devalued, production costs higher...unfair.

The playing field here is not level. The beef producer, milk producer, poultry producer, sheep producer et al. has to compete in the market place with his brethren who have the good fortune to be outside the thumb of the CCC.

It costs more to produce a product when one's land is under the jurisdiction of CCC. Land value is severely diminished under the aegis of CCC, ask any Realtor.

The land is worth less when the farmer goes to his banker to obtain an operating loan. Farmer Jones has more than 100 additional obstacles because his land is CCC jurisdiction

Who is to compensate the landowner who operates under the aegis of the CCC, for the land devaluation and higher production costs. The County? The State? The Federal Government?

It seems to those of us who farm the lands, that the LCP needs to have a Stop, Look, and Listen session around a table, with the stakeholders whose grandfathers deeded over some of those local county roads, complimentary.

The well meaning Transplants, need to sit down and listen to how Marin came to have those beautiful rolling hills and pristine pastures, preserved through the *"blood sweat tears & toil"* of family generations who purchased the land over and over with inheritance taxes.

A true workshop where all stakeholders can present useful facts, so that all parties on both sides of issues can "show & tell" in a collegial manner with each point of view giving some slack, so that these proposed regulations will not toll the bell for the death of farming & ranching in Marin County and the Coastal Counties in California.

Let us postpone the LCP section involving agriculture to the spring workshop, proposed by our good Supervisor Steve Kinsey, where all California Coastal Counties can join and experience some cross pollination of ideas, with experts from both sides of the aisle, and see if we can mutually agree on what is best for California, coastal lands, & preserving local agriculture.

January 10, 2013, the Internet Blog of Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross, reviews the awakening and resurgence of the 145 thousand students who have now taken up Ag studies, preparatory for the millions of mouths the future must feed, and the importance of local Agriculture for the future.

I am optimistic that Agriculture with best management practices of resources, which is inherent in a farmer's survival, can continue in Marin County with reasonable regulations

The problem has been the paucity of information farming and ranching has provided to "environmental organizations" so that the well meaning members can understand and see what takes place on the farms & ranches.

That in Marin County, for the farmer and rancher, it is necessary live on the land. He is not a mail box income receiving farmer, who collects money without calluses, but rather is *"hands on"*, without the time to proselytize his point of view, he is too busy keeping the farm /ranch working. Let us help him to survive.

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