



MARIN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

P.O. Box 219, Pt. Reyes, CA 94956

November 8, 2012

The Marin County Board of Supervisors
Via e-mail c/o Kristin Drumm: kdrumm@marincounty.org

Re: Local Coastal Program Amendments: November 13th hearing

Dear President Kinsey and members of the board,

The Marin County Farm Bureau respectfully submits two additional comments on the Local Coastal Program Amendments (LCPA). This letter is in addition to the comments we made for the October 2nd hearing.

At the October 2nd hearing your board removed viticulture from the Principally Permitted uses in **Policy C-AG-2**. In our comments for the original hearing we asked that viticulture remain principally permitted. We recognize that some environmental organizations are concerned with the water usage of grapes and that the Coastal Commission staff is concerned with the grading that may be necessary to plant grapes.

First of all, we need to understand how much water is actually used. According to Ronda Smith, viticulture specialist at the University of California Cooperative Extension Service in Sonoma County, grapes can be dry farmed if there is some moisture in the soil. This would require no water. On the other end of the spectrum would be planting in gravel or sandy soil where water could leach away, in these situations grapes could require as much as 3 acre inches of water per acre of grapes. To put this in perspective, our 250 cow dairy uses about 20 acre feet of water per year, if we planted grapes in the highest water usage areas (sand/ gravel) we would be able to plant 80 acres before we would need additional water. Most of the ranches in West Marin have stock ponds with water that could be used for some amount of grapes without touching any ground water or developing new water storage.

To find a compromise on the issue of grading, perhaps we could find a slope of the land that cannot be exceeded in order for the planting to be principally permitted.

What we would like is to see some middle ground met. We offer this suggestion as a compromise to protect the ranchers' ability to at least plant some grapes to see what varieties may grow well on their soil without being subject to appeal:

“Viticulture shall be principally permitted up to 10 acres on ground with a slope of 10% or less”.

Next, we have made our concerns clear about wanting the historical use of agriculture to be recognized so it will not be lost if a field goes fallow for a short time for an unforeseen reason. There is currently language in:

C-BIO-14 Wetlands

3. Prohibit grazing or other agricultural uses in a wetland, except in those ~~reclaimed~~ areas presently (~~prior to the certification of this amended policy on [DATE]~~) used for such activities (i.e., grazing was established prior to April 1, 1981, the date on which Marin's first LCP was certified).

We appreciate the above language as it pertains to wetlands. We would like to see this language added to the LCP in regards to streams and riparian areas.

While these are our only two additions, we want to be certain to reiterate the importance of our original letter and hope you will work from it in your discussions on the 13th.

Sincerely,

Dominic Grossi

President

Marin County Farm Bureau

CC Davis Lewis
Stacy Carlsen