

EL DORADO LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

AGENDA OF MARCH 28, 2007

REGULAR MEETING

TO: Ted Long, Chairman, and
Members of the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation
Commission

FROM: José C. Henríquez, Executive Officer

PREPARED BY: Erica Sanchez, Policy Analyst

AGENDA ITEM #8a1: Consider a response to a probable change in the Sacramento County General Plan that may affect the preservation of agriculture in El Dorado County

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission receive the following information relating to a failed proposal for a change in the Sacramento County General Plan that would have affected the preservation of agriculture in El Dorado County. Although the proposal has since been denied by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, the Commission may consider submitting a response to the Board opposing the urbanization of lands adjacent to the El Dorado-Sacramento county line.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION

Given LAFCO's responsibility to preserve agricultural and open space resources and to encourage orderly growth within El Dorado County, LAFCO has a role in submitting comments to other governmental agencies contemplating changes which may impact these two aspects of the Commission's mission.

BACKGROUND

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors considered and approved a proposal to open more than 20,000 acres of land to development in its new General Plan. The area included large parcels of agricultural land in the eastern portion of Sacramento County along Jackson Road and east of Grant Line Road. These parcels are within Sacramento County's urban growth limit and are adjacent to areas already planned for growth with its current General Plan and in SACOG's Blueprint. This action will not affect El Dorado County and is not an issue of concern to El Dorado LAFCO.

Also under consideration, however, was a proposal to include in the Sacramento County General Plan an additional 3,400 acres of undeveloped land for future development along the Sacramento-El Dorado county line. These parcels are located south of White Rock Road between Scott Road and Latrobe Road. The implication is, if this area were to be considered for development by Sacramento County, the landowner would then be free to develop the area to the highest density allowed by the zoning.

According to a Sacramento Bee article dated March 3, 2007 (Attachment A), a representative for Angelo Tsakopoulos (the landowner) cited development of jobs and housing in adjacent El Dorado County as a reason for Sacramento County to build on its side of the border. Prior to final Board consideration, at least one Sacramento County Supervisor stated he was under the impression that there were many plans submitted to the County of El Dorado to develop along the county border and therefore, Sacramento County should coordinate its development with these plans.

However, as noted in the attached map (Attachment B), most of the 3,400 acres abut undeveloped land that is currently under Williamson Act contract. This area south of the Southern Pacific Railroad is used primarily for agricultural production and is not slated for growth by either the El Dorado County General Plan or the SACOG Blueprint. Development has occurred north of this area within the Carson Creek Specific Plan and the areas designated Research and Development and Industrial, however, all development and infrastructure ceases below the railroad tracks. LAFCO staff is not aware of any planned growth that is considered south of that point. In addition, the El Dorado County General Plan calls for the protection of grazing land and limits the minimum size of agricultural parcels to 40 acres. The twelve agricultural parcels in question range from 40 to 495 acres, with a median size of 201 acres.

A General Plan workshop to discuss the matter was held March 14, 2007. Because the hearing occurred before this Commission was able to consider the matter at its March 28, 2007 meeting and take a formal position, LAFCO Executive Officer José Henríquez submitted a letter to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors outlining various concerns to the proposed addition (Attachment C). The letter was intended to highlight the above information so that it may be considered by the Board of Supervisors before making a final decision. After considering all information, including Mr. Henríquez's letter and testimony from more than 100 local residents opposing the proposition, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to deny the proposal to include the additional 3,400 acres in the area to be studied for development.

Despite this favorable ruling, staff recommends that the Commission submit a letter formally opposing the urbanization along the county line because opening these additional 3,400 acres up for development would likely cause an adverse affect in neighboring areas of El Dorado County. The El Dorado County General Plan does not plan for development in this portion of the county, and it is staff's opinion that urban development across the county line would introduce growth-inducing effects. Currently there is no existing infrastructure in the southwest portion of the county and development of the area would first require roads, water and wastewater transmission lines as well as other services that are desired by residential and commercial development. The adjacent portion of land in the southeastern portion of the County is zoned agricultural and approximately 2,593 acres are currently under Williamson Act contract. Of these, approximately 1,102 acres are in a non-renewal status with contracts

scheduled to terminate in January of 2008. This expiration, along with the potentially incompatible land uses in Sacramento County, could encourage premature development of these agricultural lands and result in a loss of agricultural production.

Attachment A: Sacramento Bee Articles, March 3, 2007 & March 15, 2007

Attachment B: Map of Williamson Act Contract Parcels

Attachment C: Executive Officer Letter to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Attachment D: Draft Commission Letter to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors