

September 11, 2006

**Re: Status of the Initiative and the Referendum Campaigns**

Dear Friends:

LandWatch needs your financial support to fight the County's latest proposal for a County General Plan (GPU4) – a recipe for sprawling development, which will pave over thousands of acres in Monterey County.

**The Butterfly Village/Rancho San Juan Referendum and the Community General Plan Initiative will NOT be on the November ballot!** Both measures are stuck in legal limbo awaiting clarification of the *Padilla* decision from the Federal Ninth Circuit Court. Ultimately, we will prevail in court. We are confident that the citizens of Monterey County will regain the right to petition their government. Once *Padilla* is reversed, we should succeed in obtaining court orders forcing a special election within 90 days of the order. Just when the Federal Ninth Circuit Court will clarify *Padilla* so that the court orders can be issued, however, remains unclear.

The battle over the County General Plan has reached a critical juncture. With our ballot measures stuck in court, the radical pro-growth majority of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors has directed planning staff to race forward in the approval process of the fourth draft of the General Plan (GPU4). **Four members of the Board are determined to approve GPU4 before our measures make it to the ballot, and we must leave no stone unturned in our effort to stop them!**

GPU4 is likely to be approved in December of this year or in January 2007. In their haste to approve GPU4 as quickly as possible, County staff has recently released a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) so fundamentally flawed, it staggers the imagination. Important data are five years out of date, confused, miscalculated and inappropriately analyzed. Other key data are completely omitted; just last week the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, which is required by law to review the EIR, notified the County “the Traffic Study was not included in the Draft Program EIR”, and the District has requested an extension of the review period as has the US Department of Fish and Wildlife. The DEIR erroneously identifies full build-out of the unincorporated area under GPU4 at 53,947 units, when the number identified in the EIR should be at least 229,000 units! These are not small mistakes, but given the County's rush to approve GPU4 before our ballot measures are put to the voters, these major flaws are unlikely to be corrected before the EIR is certified and GPU4 approved.

LandWatch has organized and deployed a great team of a half a dozen professional planners and attorneys to scrutinize the 1000+ page DEIR in minute detail so that our comment letters will make clear all the devastating environmental impacts of the disastrous development allowed for under GPU4. **This effort, critical to achieving a responsible County General Plan, is also very expensive – that's why we are asking for your support now. I hope you will make as generous a contribution as you can so that we are prepared to fight GPU4 in court and continue to prepare to win the Rancho San Juan Referendum and the Community General Plan Initiative when those measures make it to the ballot.**

Successful litigation will force the County to appropriately conduct the environmental analysis of GPU4, a plan which will allow rampant suburban sprawl on thousands of acres in the unincorporated county and will guarantee gridlock, exacerbate water problems and undermine the County's economic base. Not only will litigation buy the time necessary to get our measures on the ballot, having the court force the county to conduct honest and thorough environmental analysis of GPU4 will draw public attention to its deficiencies in comparison to the Community General Plan Initiative.

Preparation for successful litigation is just part of the work that lies ahead for LandWatch. We are reaching out across the county, talking about what's at stake. Two weeks ago we held meetings in King City and Soledad. Next week we will be in Marina. In addition to holding community meetings, we are also focused on the political strategy to win at the ballot. Once the court orders are issued, forcing the Rancho San Juan Referendum and Community General Plan Initiative on the ballot, we'll have only 90 days before the election. Not knowing when those orders will come, we have to be ready with our campaign strategies as soon as possible.

We must achieve a General Plan that is good for the local economy, protects and preserves our incredible environment, and accomplishes our social equity goals. We need a plan for responsible growth, which will provide more housing opportunities for average and below average income families without breaking the bank – without undermining public safety and our quality of life. LandWatch is absolutely committed to this task.

**Giving up is simply not an option!** There is just too much at stake. The success we've realized to-date has been achieved because of the active and generous support of our members. You have been with us every step of the way. Our continued success depends on you as well. **Please continue your loyal support by sending your financial contribution to LandWatch today. The future of our community does depend on all of us!**

Do not hesitate to contact me at any time. And thank you for your on-going support!

Very truly yours,

Chris Fitz, Executive Director  
LandWatch Monterey County

**PS: Remember, your contribution to LandWatch is tax-deductible—and can change the future!**