June 2, 2014

Alan Stumpf
Assistant Director
City of Salinas

SUBJECT: DRAFT GENERAL PLAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Dear Mr. Stumpf:

LandWatch Monterey County reviewed the City of Salinas’ proposed draft Economic Development Element, and we have the following comments:

1. **Summary Table:** The element should include a summary table identifying the amount of vacant land and its land use designation within the City boundaries and existing Sphere of Influence. It should also identify the amount of acreage by area proposed for annexation.

2. **Alternative to Annexation:** Lack of available land for commercial and industrial development is identified as a major constraint to economic growth throughout the document. The element should address a general plan amendment that would redesignate the 3,400 acres currently designated for residential development that have remain largely vacant for the past 12 years.

3. **Existing Areas Designated for Commercial/Retail/Mixed Use:** The existing area within the City is designated for 3,992 million square feet of commercial/retail/mixed use and public and semi-public uses. Please explain why more is needed when so much existing space is available.

4. **Policies to Encourage Infill and Revitalization of Existing Commercial and Industrial Areas:** It is generally accepted that new commercial development on the boundaries of a local jurisdiction discourages infill. The element should include policies that require development within existing commercial and industrial areas prior to expanding to the areas adjacent to the City. Recent opposition to County’s proposed Capitol One building purchase shows there is a general desire of the community for city-centered growth. Local business leaders including the Salinas Valley Chamber, the Oldtown Salinas Association, and the Salinas United Business Association are opposing the county’s proposal to
purchase the old Capitol One building on the outskirts of the city limits because it violates efforts to revitalize downtown.

5. **Vacant Buildings and Approved and Unconstructed Projects:** The element should identify existing vacant buildings within downtown and central city areas. Additionally, it should identify approved and unconstructed commercial and industrial projects such as the Uni-Kool Ag Industrial Center.

6. **Existing Agricultural Land Easements:** The draft plan should address properties included in the plan for which the Ag Land Trust already maintains easements.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the document.

Sincerely,

Amy L. White
Executive Director