

October 6 2009

To Martha Spencer
Humboldt County Planning Commissions
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

As a licensed forester, realtor and development consultant with almost 20 years of experience I have witnessed both the market and regulatory factors affecting non-industrial timber management and their corresponding effects on individual land owners, rural communities and Humboldt County as a whole.

Over the past several years our County has been witness to a shift in our timber industry from one of being a dominating economic driver to what it is today. Although the timber industry will always be an important part of the North Coast as both a significant employer and landowner, the simple fact is that in order for us to provide for our future, we must as a community also expand and create new jobs and industry.

This type of economic succession from one economy to a new one can be seen nationally in cities such as Portland and Corvallis Oregon, and locally in cities such as Arcata.

Jobs within these communities develop due to the importation of talented people. This influx of professionals and new industries are created by offering these entities and individuals a superior quality of life that actively competes with the amenities offered by other communities.

This economic growth can be achieved by emphasizing wise development and focusing future development within urban planning areas while still providing for a mixture of housing type and densities. This type of planning must place an emphasis on the quality of life issues, including but not limited to, access to community forests and open space.

This type of regional planning further increases the overall physical health of the community, lowers the cost of expensive infrastructure in the form of rural road development and maintenance, increases the potential tax base through additional population, redevelopment and commercial growth and assists the County in complying with existing and future state and federal greenhouses gas regulations.

Therefore, given the aforementioned statement I would like to have the County consider and support the following policies:

Community Forests

Establish County policies that will establish and implement a community forest program emphasizing recreation, open space access, trail use, camping opportunities, environmental restoration and timber production.

Conservation Easements

The County needs to develop a program to assist landowners in creating and developing Conservation Easements. In addition the County needs to support this program by demonstrating the ability to become an alternative recipient and holder of Conservation Easements.

Adoption of New Resource Planning Options

Create a County policy that allows for the use of a Forest Land Restoration Plan (FLRP) that could be used as an additional option to either a Non-industrial Timber Management Plan or Timber Harvest Plan to demonstrate intent for forest management consistent with TPZ.

County Current Requirement for Joint Timber Management Plans

If in fact, the County wishes to proceed with your policy of allowing subdivision of TPZ lands to a minimum parcel size of 40 acres I would recommend that the County adopt the following:

End the requirement of a Joint Timber Management Plan. As a professional forester it is my professional opinion the JTMP is not a realistic management document and demonstrates little if any actual intent to manage the property for anything but a future house site. Given that, it is my recommendation

that the County require a California State Approved Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan, Timber Harvest Plan or Forest Land Restoration Plan that would demonstrate actual management intent consistent with the TPZ zoning.

Zoning and Taxation

- Establish a system of two tier timber zoning providing for the following:
 1. Non-Industrial Timber Lands (ownerships of less than 5000 acres) allowing for 1 dwelling per 160 acres.
 2. Industrial Timberlands (ownerships of more than 5000) allowing for 1 dwelling per 600 acres.
- The rollout from TPZ zoning designation substandard parcels if timber production is no longer a primary use. Evidence of timber management could include recent yield tax receipts, establishment of a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan and/or Timber Harvest Plan or Forest Land Restoration Plan.
- Support TPZ tax status for parcels found in compliance with County standards
- Create and enforce a system to permit existing non-permitted dwellings on lands zoned TPZ. To reassess property taxes applied to the landowner based on the additional value of the parcel. To monitor the landowner to insure they manage their lands for either timber Land Management or forest ecosystem restoration.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter

Sincerely,



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