

August 9, 2010

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 "H" Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Chapter 5 Community Infrastructure and Services

Dear Chairman Smith and Commissioners:

I wanted to take this opportunity to follow up my comments at the July meeting regarding the fire service aspects of chapter 5. The oral comment period did not allow for detailed discussion of the issues presented, and this letter will attempt to address and detail concerns with the draft presentations currently under circulation.

At the time of the drafting of this letter, the versions of the staff proposals are those that were presented at the July 29th meeting. Per the direction of the commission, a group of fire service representatives met to discuss appropriate issues and the concepts that emerged were translated by planning staff (John Miller and Cybelle) into language similar to the matrix presented on the 29th. For clarity I will refer to the 7/29 proposals as the staff proposals, and the second set of modified language as the "Fire Service Proposals".

As I indicated in my oral comments several of the staff proposals(in particular IS-S4 and IS-S5) are completely dysfunctional in that they come with huge administrative and financial burdens, ignore fiscal reality, and ironically will not result in any actual improvement of fire services. I make this assertion because:

- 1) Given other constraints proposed by the staff in their preferred alternatives, formation of a new District is virtually impossible given the nature of the process and the burden of findings necessary in the LAFCO process.



Planning staff have indicated that the "Fire Service Proposals" will be presented to your Commission prior to the August 12th meeting.

These four proposals work to offer options to extract applicants from the staff proposals insurmountable requirements, but still have difficulty in that the determinations necessary to allow applicants to exercise the least onerous options require a determination of feasibility/nonfeasibility that may go all the way to a LAFCO determination of nonformation of a new district. At the very least, the Commission should ensure that there are well defined determinations and standards that result in a feasible/nonfeasible determination, and put definitive limitations on the "required mitigations".

The most reasonable mitigation limitations would be enforcement of existing construction/development standards as characterized by the California Fire Code, Wildland Fire Code, State Fire Marshall Standards, or other reference code documentation. Leaving such matters open to case by case determination would lead to a patchwork application that would be ineffective and unevenly administered.

I thank you for your consideration, and would like to note that I have an appreciation of the difficulty of your task and hope these comments bring clarity rather than confusion.

Sincerely,



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