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April 28, 2011



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Mary Gearheart, Chair
Humboldt County Planning Commission
Community Development Services Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, California 95501

Re: General Plan, Section 10.7, Scenic Resources

Dear Chair Gearheart and Commissioners:

The Humboldt Association of REALTORS® has reviewed the Scenic Resources chapter and comments that the virtual absence of an Alternative C option, generally the least restrictive option, is revealing. What is otherwise being proposed in Alternatives A and/or B is another layer of restriction and regulation on private property owners. In order for the county to accomplish what it seeks in this chapter, it might consider the use of incentives to motivate owners.

We note in staff's background discussion found in this chapter that much of the scenic resources in the county (e.g. timberlands or agricultural lands) are already restricted or protected. In the case of timberlands, state laws governing timber harvest regulations significantly narrow the scope of scenic protection measures in the county. And further, scenic protection of agricultural lands is accomplished by policies in the Land Use Element. Many coastal areas are already protected by design review requirements. Additional regulation, as proposed in this chapter, again, leads to an over-regulated environment which hampers production of housing, erodes private property rights and dampens economic opportunities in the county.


The Association recommends a definitions and glossary addendum should also be included in this section. This chapter is especially susceptible to subjective interpretation. For example, what is the meaning of "scenic"? An overreaching definition has the potential of removing land from development. This could be land suitable for new housing needed in the future. We suggest Alternative D, the existing Framework Plan, with modifications as noted in our "voting chart", works very well in addressing these Scenic Resource issues and that the rest of the proposed language, i.e. Alternatives A and B, should be deleted.

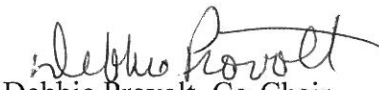


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We would appreciate your review and consideration of these comments as well as those noted in the attached voting chart. We look forward to continued participation in this update process and to working with the County towards adoption of a positive General Plan benefiting all the citizens of the county.

Sincerely,


Victoria Copeland, Co-Chair
General Plan Subcommittee


Debbie Provolt, Co-Chair
General Plan Subcommittee

Attachment

cc: Kirk Girard, Director
Tom Hofweber, Supervising Planner
Martha Spencer, Supervising Planner