

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE
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F3c



January 29, 2004 (for February 20, 2004 Hearing)

To: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Persons

From: Diane Landry, Central Coast District Manager
Dan Carl, Coastal Planner

Subject: Certification Review for Santa Cruz County Local Coastal Program Amendment Number 1-02 Part 3 (PVUSD High School MOU)

At the September 2003 Coastal Commission meeting in Eureka, the Commission approved, with suggested modifications, Santa Cruz County Local Coastal Program (LCP) Major Amendment Number 1-02 Part 3. This amendment does two things.

First, it puts in place a series of policies designed to prevent urban development in the farmlands, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas west of the City of Watsonville. This area is primarily agricultural, mostly zoned for commercial agriculture (CA), and is interlaced with significant habitat within the hills and valleys, including the fingers of the Watsonville Slough system as it wends its way to the Monterey Bay. The new policies provide an additional level of protection to further safeguard the rolling agricultural and habitat landscape from non-compatible development. The main way that this is accomplished is through a new utility prohibition zoning district that applies to the boundary of the County and the City of Watsonville on the west side of Highway One in south Santa Cruz County. The new district implements a series of new LCP policies geared towards maintaining the stable urban-rural boundary at Highway One in south County. The extension of sewer and potable water utilities is prohibited across the new district.

Second, the amendment provides Land Use Plan (LUP) and Implementation Plan (IP, or zoning) policies that describe standards for improvements to Harkins Slough Road. These standards are designed to protect the environmentally sensitive habitats of both the West Branch of Struve Slough and Hanson Slough that both cross under Harkins Slough Road in the event that the road is improved to serve development (for example, for access to the currently under construction high school, as is currently proposed).

The LCP amendment fulfills the County's obligations under the MOU between the City, County, and Coastal Commission. The MOU was a result of the City LCP amendment (certified by the Commission in October 2000) that modified the City's LCP to allow the high school use on Area C of the City of Watsonville coastal zone. [Note: The high school has since been permitted and is currently under construction. Litigation (against the City, the School District, and the Commission) associated with the coastal permit decision is still pending (*Hernandez and Reader v. City of Watsonville et al.*, Santa Cruz Superior Court No. 142326).]

By action taken November 25, 2003, Santa Cruz County adopted the amending LCP text as directed by the Commission's suggested modifications (see exhibit A). This action was taken within the required six month timeframe.

The Executive Director has determined that the actions taken by the County are legally adequate and



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that the amended LCP should be certified. The Executive Director recommends that the Commission concur with this determination and that the LCP, as amended, be certified. If the Commission concurs, the amended LCP will be certified as of today's date (i.e., February 20, 2004), and notification of this certification and Commission concurrence will be forwarded to the County.

Motion. I move that the Commission concur with the Executive Director's determination that the actions taken by Santa Cruz County to accept the Commission's suggested modifications for LCP Amendment 1-02 Part 3 are legally adequate.

Executive Director's Recommendation. The Executive Director recommends a **YES** vote on the motion. Passage of this motion will result in certification of the Santa Cruz County LCP as directed by the Commission's approval with suggested modifications of LCP Amendment 1-02 Part 3; the amended LCP will be certified as of today's date (i.e., February 20, 2004). The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: County's Acceptance of the Coastal Commission's Suggested LCP Modifications

