

## MEMORANDUM

To: Monterey County Planning Commission

From: Commissioner Ottone

Date: July 27, 2010

Re: Draft Transmittal Letter to Accompany General Plan Recommendation to Board of Supervisors

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Commission Chair Brown appointed himself and Commissioners Vandevere and Ottone to a subcommittee to draft a transmittal letter to accompany the Commission's recommendations on the 2010 General Plan to the Board of Supervisors. The subcommittee met and discussed the format and content of the draft letter, and Commissioner Ottone volunteered to prepare the initial draft.

The initial draft was circulated among the subcommittee members and discussed. The draft was acceptable to the committee with only one area of disagreement. For your reference, I have highlighted the portion of the letter at issue. The disagreement involves the approach to be taken in recommending to the Board the action to be taken on the definition of Long Term Sustainable Water Supply.

During the Commission's meeting of July 28, 2010, I will present the letter and try to articulate the difference of opinion among the committee members to the entire Commission. It is my understanding that Chairman Brown will then open the matter for the Commission to discuss and attempt to resolve the disagreement. Then, if necessary, the letter can be revised to reflect the Commission's direction.

The Monterey County Planning Commission submits this letter of transmittal with the attached Findings and Evidence in recommending approval by the Board of Supervisors of the 2010 General Plan, as revised.

The Planning Commission held a lengthy public hearing on the General Plan over a three-month period. In the course of the public hearing, the Planning Commission initially reviewed the General Plan in an element-by-element manner beginning in April, 2010. During this initial review, the Commission flagged for staff review, comment and/or possibly revision, individual policies that appeared to require additional scrutiny. Staff then reviewed the flagged items, and offered clarification, comments and in some instances, proposed revisions of the policies to address various concerns. The Planning Commission then reviewed the “flagged items” with suggested revisions, in an element-by-element approach during the months of June and July, 2010. At the conclusion of each element, a straw vote was taken among the commission members to determine whether there was agreement on the revised language of the element. Public comment was received by the Commission upon the initial review of each element, as well as the review of the revised policies.

The Planning Commission is pleased to announce that it has reached a consensus in recommending approval of the 2010 General Plan. The Commission understands that this General Plan resulted from a “compromise” reached in 2007 among a number of stakeholders. In reviewing and revising the General Plan, the Commission attempted to keep the core elements of the “compromise” in mind, while at the same time addressing certain issues that needed clarification or further scrutiny.

Please note that the Carmel Valley Master Plan has been revised as a result of community meetings convened by Supervisor Potter and Commissioner Diehl to address specific concerns of several stakeholder groups. The Planning Commission believes that the revised text of the Carmel Valley Master Plan has adequately addressed the concerns of the stakeholder groups, and specifically thanks Commissioner Diehl for her leadership in resolving these issues.

There is one significant issue on which the Commission was unable to reach a consensus. That area involved the glossary definition of a “Long Term Sustainable Water Supply.” The definition is important in that it plays a significant role in the formation of the policies under Goal 3 of the Public Service element concerning water resources. The Commission elected to provide the definition contained in the glossary as a “placeholder” for purposes of finishing the review of the overall General Plan and providing this recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The definition included in the draft presented to the Board is the definition proposed by staff after the review of the Final Environmental Impact Report. The Commission modified it slightly to leave blank for the Board’s review the number of years contained within the definition.

That being said, the Commission is in agreement that this definition involves a broader policy issue. The issue concerns an approach to be taken by the Board on

projects proposed in areas where “overdraft” conditions exist. From a policy standpoint, if the Board decides that projects drawing water from basins in “overdraft” can never be considered to have a Long Term Sustainable Water Supply, then the definition could be drafted to clearly state this. If, on the other hand, the Board decides that situations may exist where projects drawing water from “overdrafted” basins could be considered to have a Long Term Sustainable Water Supply (*i.e.* when a project designed to bring a basin into balance has been approved, funded, or built), then the definition could be amended to clearly set forth the conditions (approval, funding, completion, or evidence of efficacy, etc. of water projects designed to bring the basin into balance) under which such a finding of Long Term Sustainable Water Supply can be made. If the Board elects to address this policy issue, the definition of “overdraft” is also crucial as it plays a significant role. Regardless of the decision reached, the Commission is in agreement that any analysis of the policy issues should be primarily based on scientific information and data to the greatest extent possible.

In conclusion, the Planning Commission has fulfilled its legal requirement to conduct a public hearing on the 2010 General Plan. We encourage the Board of Supervisors to proceed with approval of the 2010 General Plan based on the Planning Commission's recommendations and comments as outlined above.