



SANTA CLARA
COUNTY
FARM BUREAU

Friday, June 10, 2011

RE: Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan Public Review Draft

Dear Interested Parties,

The Santa Clara County Farm Bureau is a local non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving agriculture in Santa Clara County as a business and a way of life. We work on behalf of farmers and ranchers throughout the county who produce our food, fiber, and flowers, and steward our natural resources. Our members manage the lands that have provided endangered species habitat for generations and they own much of the land identified as potential acquisitions for the Reserve System.

The Farm Bureau has been involved with the Habitat Plan since stakeholder meetings began. After extensive review, our organization formally opposes the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan December 2010 Public Review Draft. The Public Review Draft misses the mark from what it was originally intended to do and it does not meet the needs of Santa Clara County residents. The system for complying with state and federal Endangered Species Acts is broken, but the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan is not the appropriate fix.

Our concerns with the existing draft are numerous and broad. It is clear to us that the plan is not economically viable, does not provide for improved planning processes, is inequitable by imposing the same costly requirements on projects that impact endangered species as those that have no direct impacts, and will not contribute to the recovery of endangered species and their habitat.

Existing land use policies, state and federal laws to protect endangered species, the Williamson Act, and land conservation efforts in the region already provide strong protections for species and habitat. Endangered Species Act compliance adds cost to many public and private projects, but throwing nearly \$1 billion into a Habitat Plan managed by an unaccountable agency over the next 50 years will not solve our problems. Our local cities, county, and infrastructure agencies should not be pursuing an HCP/NCCP at this time.

Although we oppose the current Habitat Plan, we intend to remain involved in its future development to ensure our concerns are addressed. We expect you will respect and understand our position and will continue to work with us. We can be reached at (408) 776-1684.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Chiala'.

Tim Chiala,
President