



county of Santa Cruz

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February 2, 1999

Agenda: February 9, 1999

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Report Back on Environmental Health Concerns

Dear Members of the Board:

On February 2, 1999, at the request of Supervisor Almquist, your Board directed the County Administrative Office to return to your Board on today's agenda with a recommendation to establish a task force to address issues raised by homeowners, business people, realtors and contractors concerning Environmental Health procedures. In addition to the membership suggested by Supervisor Almquist in his February 2nd letter, your Board directed the CAO to include additional members on the Task Force which would encompass a broad spectrum of parties interested in and knowledgeable of the Environmental Health department's role and responsibilities pertaining to sewage disposal.

As established by your Board, the primary responsibility of the Task Force was to:

- schedule a public meeting(s) to gather input and identify concerns raised by members of the public; and
- report back to the Board on April 27, 1999 regarding the outcome of the Task Force's work and recommended administrative and/or procedural changes or improvements to the sewage disposal program.

During the course of your deliberations on this matter your Board indicated that 'the Task Force was charged with a review of the administrative and procedural operations of the sewage disposal program and not the County's Sewage Disposal Ordinance (County Code Chapter 7.38). In this regard, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pursuant to State law, has ultimate jurisdiction concerning sewer discharge programs throughout the State of California and must approve all local sewage disposal ordinances.

The current version of the Santa Cruz County Sewage Disposal Ordinance was adopted in 1995. The ordinance is the result of lengthy negotiations with the RWQCB and was the basis for the State to lift a 13-year prohibition on new systems, or repairs and expansions of existing systems which would increase discharge in the San Lorenzo Valley. Because of the potential impact on water quality issues in the San Lorenzo Valley, the RWQCB essentially imposed the requirements contained in our Sewage Disposal Ordinance. Because the San Lorenzo Valley contains the highest concentration of septic tanks in the State, the RWQCB's requirements are among the most stringent in the State and cannot be modified without undergoing an extensive process which would necessitate approval by the RWQCB.

In accordance with your Board's direction, the County Administrative Office proposes to convene a task force with the membership consisting of the following organizations and representatives:

Environmental Health Task Force	
Name	Organization
Supervisor Jeff Almquist Supervisor Walt Symons	Board of Supervisors
Pat Busch	Acting County Administrative Officer
Chuck Moody Dr. George Wolfe Diane Evans John Ricker Rafael Sanchez	HSA Administrator County Health Officer Director, Environmental Health Water Resources Specialist Environmental Health Inspector
Mike Dever Ken Hart	Assistant Planning Director Environmental Coordinator
Howard Kolb	Regional Water Quality Control Board
Ray Rohrbough	Contractor - <i>Rohrbough's Valley Septic Service</i>
Jay Baker	Landowner (<i>retired, member Boulder Creek Fire Board</i>)
John Carver	Realtor - <i>Century 21</i>
Chris Rummel	Consultant - <i>Environmental Consultants</i>
David Ross	Neighborhood Advocate - <i>San Lorenzo Valley Water Board</i>

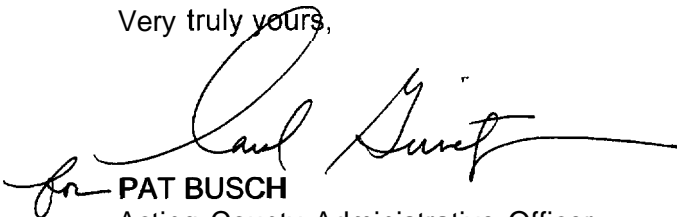
It is our recommendation that the Task Force meetings be staffed by the County Administrative Office with technical support from HSA staff. It is anticipated that the first meetings will be held later this month and the Task Force will develop its work program at that time. All meetings will comply with the Brown Act. If needed, Spanish translation services will be available to facilitate discussion

with monolingual residents.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Accept and file this report;
2. Direct the CAO's Office to convene the Environmental Health Task Force as outlined in this letter; and
3. Direct the CAO to return to the Board on April 27, 1999 with a report addressing the work of the Task Force and recommendations to improve the procedural and/or administrative operations of the Sewage Disposal Ordinance.

Very truly yours,


PAT BUSCH
Acting County Administrative Officer

ES/PB

cc: All Task Force members