



Contra Costa County

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Mary N. Piepho
Date: February 3, 2009

Subject: Preservation of Contra Costa County Agricultural Lands and Promotion of Ag Tourism

RECOMMENDATION(S):

DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to review the current regulations of the County's designated Agricultural Core area in consultation with Contra Costa County Agriculture Task Force and determine specific actions that would further incentivize promotion of agricultural tourism and preserve the economic vitality of local agricultural enterprises and include consideration of:

- Creation of an ordinance for consideration that would create an agricultural mitigation program requiring developers that convert all land zoned agricultural to urban uses mitigate the loss of the farmland by dedicating agricultural easements in perpetuity on comparable farmland to a local land trust or trust fund.
- Creation of a system that allows for the transfer of dwelling units in the County's Agricultural Core to other parcels, within the Agricultural Core, allowing for the clustering of dwelling units and the ability for larger parcels of agricultural land to be assembled.
- Transfer of currently allowed density out of the Agricultural Core and allow the dwelling units to be transferred to urban (or newly developing) areas of the County.
- Zoning in the Agricultural Core that supports agricultural tourism and enterprise with

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **02/03/2009** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Gayle B. Uilkema, District II Supervisor
Mary N. Piepho, District III Supervisor
Susan A. Bonilla, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: February 3, 2009

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: , Deputy

Contact: Karyn Cornell (925)
240-7260

cc:

the creation of zoning, permitting, and fees that permit and promote economic viability of small-scale farming (agricultural tourism, value-added processing, and wineries).

-

RECOMMENDATION(S): (CONT'D)

Identifying how other agricultural tourism programs are funded throughout California, with the possible establishment of a local growers group, to assist in the funding of activities such as signage and other opportunities highlighting agricultural tourism and agricultural marketing opportunities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

BACKGROUND:

Contra Costa County is one of California's most productive farming regions, producing agricultural products valued at more than \$100 million dollars and contributing more than \$300 million dollars to Contra Costa County's annual economy. Agriculture provides Contra Costa citizens with jobs, open space and a source of fresh, local food, as well as intangible history, culture and community benefit.

Agriculture in Contra Costa County is more than a historic element of our East County community. Local food and farming has become an issue of intense public interest. In our county, the Bay Area, and across the nation, people have become increasingly concerned that we work together to maintain a safe, healthy, local source of food for our communities and future generations.

Contra Costa County has recently taken several steps to promote the viability of local agriculture through the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Board Order adopted in March 2008, the recalculation of Road Impact Fees for Wineries and Olive Mills in October 2007 and the adoption of several amendments to the County's Farm Stand Ordinance in June, 2007. This Board Order is intended to further evolve the revitalization of agriculture in Contra Costa County. However, there are still other areas which can expand the opportunities of agricultural land owners with the idea that this will allow farm lands to remain in productive farming. Such expanded activities in farm lands have occurred in other counties throughout the State.

The District III Supervisor has been made aware of efforts such as an ordinance from the County of Riverside for consideration in Contra Costa County. This board order request further research on the Riverside County ordinance and other efforts where zone classifications have been changed to encourage agricultural cultivation that would preserve the rural lifestyle as well as further production of local agricultural activities.

CLERK'S ADDENDUM

Supervisor Uilkema inquired as to the cost to be borne by Development and Conservation Department and whether any discussion of funding had taken place between the Department and the Agricultural Task Force.

Catherine Kutsuris noted that the Department would be able to participate at some level but that some commitment for grant funding would be necessary and that developments will take place over a series of years.

Supervisor Gioia said that the work of the County must continue and at times when the Board is developing policy there is no outside source to bear the cost. He said that long-term advantages and possible future revenues must also be considered.

The following people spoke on the matter: Kathryn Lyddan, Brentwood, Agricultural Land Trust; John Viano, Contra Costa Farm Bureau; Barbara Frantz. Mr. Tom Powers did not wish to speak, but provided written comments.