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Sent: Sat, May 4, 2013 7:22 pm

Subject: HECA in Buttonwillow

When the Land Conservation Act of 1965 was enacted it was the desire of the legislators and the public to thwart "hop-scotch" development of prime agricultural lands. Before this Act took effect many farmers had been "taxed" out of production due to properties in their vicinity being developed for commercial and/or residential uses. Local planning commissions and city fathers being eager for revenues effectively "rubber-stamped" approvals of developments and gave deaf ears to agricultural interests. Adjacent farm lands were then taxed on their potential development value making it economically unfeasible to continue farm ownership and use. By entering into a contract with the state to preserve farm use taxes were levied based upon farm production values and although areas continued to grow the elimination of the "hop-scotch" element made for more orderly and efficient land use. At length many "planners" began to recognize the merits of such efficiencies and exhibited a sometimes surprising acknowledgement of the fact that agriculture is often the highest and best use of a given property.

While the "Act" found it's purpose it was not without a few flaws. Written into it was the ability for an owner to opt out with the payment of a differential tax penalty whereby taxes would be reassessed for the previous ten years however due to the elements of Proposition

13 this penalty is now minimalized. In the instant case, HECA will pay little penalty and proceed with a development that will have immediate adverse consequences to surrounding properties which by their very nature will multiply in deleterious effect in the future due to other as yet unspecified non-agricultural conversions.

Notwithstanding the abundant reasons for denying HECA it's realization due to traffic, pollution, dangerous proximities to urban uses it appears that little consideration has been given to alternative sites in areas nearby where either by geologic formation (hills) or heavily alkaline soils, productive agriculture is severely limited. Conversion from agriculture is forever. If this new technology someday ceases to be economically feasible or if it's existence proves to be even more environmentally questionable than heretofore, there is no going back. Perhaps best said by John Sawhill, "A society is defined not only by what it creates but by what it refuses to destroy".

Sincerely

PETE PARSON