

**GARY L. FERAMISCO
TREASURER-TAX COLLECTOR**

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April 30, 2001

Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

Subject: Grand Jury Report, 2000-2001 on Juvenile Probation

Dear Judge Melville:

Finding # 15n

The loss of any housing within the County is regrettable.

Response. Agree with the finding. The cost of housing has skyrocketed in recent years, with the median price of a single family home in 2000 at \$520,000 on the South Coast, and \$320,000 in the Santa Ynez Valley. During the past several years, apartment rents have increased by about 10% per year, and vacancy rates have decreased to 1% or less, depending on the area of the County. This data indicates that the County is experiencing a "housing crisis" particularly in the area of affordable and worker housing. One major factor causing this situation is the limited supply of worker housing. Any loss of such housing is certainly regrettable, and can only contribute to making an existing bad situation worse.

Finding # 15o

The demolition of these (five staff) houses would be an unfortunate loss of valuable and scarce County resources under control of the Forest Service.

Response: Agree with the finding. The availability of worker housing proximate to the Forest Service property in question is extremely limited. In light of the high housing costs in both the South Coast of Santa Barbara County and the Santa Ynez Valley, it is entirely realistic to expect staff to have to commute to the site from long distances (Ventura County or the Santa Maria/Lompoc Housing Market Areas). This raises a jobs/housing balance issue which is of great concern to the both public officials and the general public.

Respectfully,

**GARY L. FERAMISCO
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Cc: Grand Jury Foreperson