

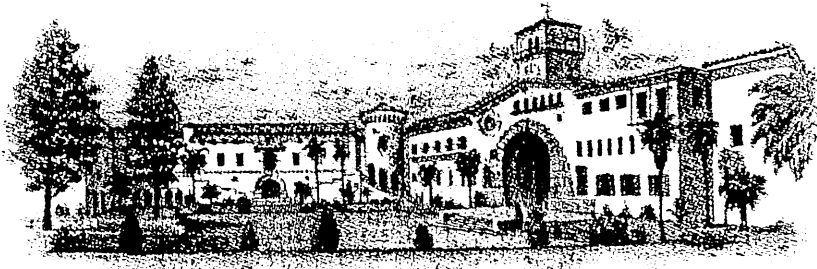
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

November 5, 2009

Received

NOV 01 2009

Santa Barbara
Grand Jury

Foreperson Fletcher Phillips
Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury
Grand Jury Room, County Courthouse
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2009-2010 Civil Grand Jury Request for
Information Regarding Immigrant Worker Housing**

Dear Foreperson Phillips:

Thank you for your letter dated October 7, 2009. In response to your questions, and request for an update, a summary of the efforts undertaken by Santa Barbara County (County) to implement *Recommendation 4* from the 2006-2007 Grand Jury's Report titled "Effects of Immigration in Santa Barbara County: A Balanced Assessment" are provided below.

Recommendation 4:

County government should investigate housing alternative for immigrant workers.

According to the 2006-2007 Civil Grand Jury Report (Report), "Immigration in Santa Barbara County provides a large workforce to the agricultural and service industries and to a lesser extent to the construction and manufacturing industries." The Report also states that immigrant workers are typically placed within the, "U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) very low income category (households earning less than 30% of the area median income)". These statements create a good frame-of-reference from which the County has responded to the Grand Jury's recommendation.

Generally, the County has continued to facilitate the development of low income housing and, more specifically, housing for agricultural workers. The County has pursued this goal through a two-pronged approach: 1) by providing funding for affordable and farmworker housing projects, and 2) creating a policy framework that incentivizes, or in some cases requires, the development of affordable and farmworker housing.

The first approach has focused on securing and leveraging local, State, and Federal funding to provide both affordable and special needs housing. These funding sources include an annual allocation of \$1.6 million from the federal HOME program, which is used by the County to develop additional affordable housing opportunities. These HOME funds have totaled over \$10 million for affordable housing projects since 1996, and have been supplemented with an additional \$7 million in direct County funding. These investments in affordable housing projects

have resulted in the development or preservation of 1,134 affordable rental units across the region. Specifically, projects such as Creekside Apartments (unanimously approved by the County's Planning Commission on May 26, 2009) have received funding from these programs. The Creekside Apartments project will result in the development of 39 units which are both price restricted at affordable levels and reserved for agricultural workers and their families.

The second approach has focused on implementing policy that supports affordable housing production. The County has utilized policy vehicles such as the Inclusionary Housing Program (IHP) to create additional affordable and special needs housing opportunities. The County's IHP requires that all housing projects which would develop 5 or more new residential units either provide affordable housing onsite, pay fees, or donate land in-lieu of building affordable units onsite. Since its inception in 1981, the IHP has generated \$5 million in in-lieu fees, which have been used to catalyze the development of 1,015 affordable housing units across the region. Leveraging these fees with State and Federal funding sources, at a 10:1 ratio on average, has yielded approximately \$50 million in total funding targeted towards building build affordable housing. These fees will continue to be used to facilitate the development of affordable housing projects.

In addition to the in-lieu fee program, County policies allow for the development of farm employee dwellings on residential and agricultural zoned parcels, which would otherwise only allow one primary residence. This has resulted in the development of an additional 28 Farm Employee Dwellings (between 2001-2008) throughout the County's rural areas. Moreover, the County's Process Improvement Team (PIT) is currently engaged in an effort to streamline the permit process needed to develop these onsite farm employee dwellings. With these streamlining efforts, the County's agricultural operators should be able to provide housing units with less time and money devoted to securing land use permits.

Finally, the County is currently updating its General Plan Housing Element for the 2009-2014 planning period. The draft Housing Element includes a series of goals, policies, and programs which seek to specifically address the need for affordable and special needs housing, such as farmworker dwellings. These include but are not limited to the following actions, which would further streamline the County's process for permitting farmworker housing:

Goal 2: Expand Housing for Special Needs Groups

Policy 2.1: Encourage housing that meets the requirements of special needs households, as identified per State law, and promotes housing diversity (i.e., size, type, tenure, location, and affordability levels).

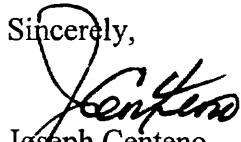
Program 2.3: Amend the County's Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) to be consistent with Health and Safety Code Sections 17021.5 and 17021.6 regarding farmworker housing developed by State-licensed agricultural operators. Section 17021.5 requires that any employee housing providing accommodations for six or fewer employees be deemed a single-family structure, while Section 17021.6 requires that employee housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in a group quarters or 12 units or spaces designed for use by a single

employee housing providing accommodations for six or fewer employees be deemed a single-family structure, while Section 17021.6 requires that employee housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in a group quarters or 12 units or spaces designed for use by a single family or household be deemed an agricultural use. As such, no conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other zoning clearance or business taxes, local registration fees, use permit fees, or other fees shall be subject to these housing types which are not typically subject to uses of the same type in the same zone. The County will amend the necessary LUDC sections through the established Process Improvement Team (PIT) process, with policy assistance provided by the Office of Long Range Planning.

As illustrated above, the County continues to recognize the importance of providing its residents with fair and feasible access to housing. As such, the County will continue to pursue funding sources and policy venues by which it can generate additional housing opportunities.

The Board thanks the Grand Jury for its interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph Centeno
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Judge William McLafferty
Michael F. Brown, County Executive Officer