

Resolution in Opposition to the Planned Dana Reserve

WHEREAS, although the proposed Dana Reserve development offers Cuesta College a donation of land for a South County Satellite Campus, the donation comes at an unacceptable environmental cost;

WHEREAS, the Dana Reserve development as proposed entails the destruction of more than 3000 mature oak trees, federally endangered species, and special habitats including Burton Mesa Chaparral;

WHEREAS, 3000 mature oak trees capture and store 596,200 lbs of carbon from the atmosphere each year, provide vital habitat for a large number of species including birds, reptiles, animals, insects, lichen, and fungi, and play a pivotal role in local climate moderation by absorbing heat, percolating water to replenish our aquifers, and anchoring the natural beauty and value of our land;

WHEREAS, Burton Mesa Chaparral is a unique and globally rare biome rooted in the soil of ancient and irreplaceable sand dunes;

WHEREAS, the proposed destruction of oak forest and woodlands violates the intent of the County Oak Woodland Ordinance and eliminates 35 acres or 96% of the remaining habitat with no clear or demonstrable ability to mitigate the loss;

WHEREAS, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) identifies six unmitigatable and significant issues including:

- Biological Impacts
- Land Planning
- Jobs to Housing Ratio
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Transportation

WHEREAS, the Dana Reserve development fails to follow the SLO County Land Use Ordinance Specific Plan of the Dana Reserve which calls for “designation of the existing oak forest habitat for open space preservation, where limited recreational and open space uses may be allowed”;

WHEREAS, the Dana Reserve development violates the SLO County General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) which cites goals to promote efforts that will “prevent or eliminate damage to the environment, preserve ecological systems, and ensure long-term economic, social, and environmental vitality”;

WHEREAS, the Dana Reserve developer’s concept indicates that only 104 homes of 1,289 units are for low and very-low income housing while 417 homes will be priced at \$1M or higher;

WHEREAS, the remainder of the proposed housing units will be for above-moderate income home buyers;

WHEREAS, there is a shortfall of \$6.6 million dollars to accommodate the influx of school-age children and this financial burden will fall on taxpayers without a commitment from the developer;

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of SLO County, the Center for Biological Diversity, the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA, the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the Sierra Club, ECOSLO, the California Native Plant Society, and the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, among others are all opposed to the Dana Reserve development.

WHEREAS, Nipomo is an unincorporated area, and the South County Advisory Board has already issued a clear recommendation in full opposition to the proposed development;

WHEREAS, the Nipomo Action Committee has collected more than 4000 county-wide signatures opposing the proposed project and in favor of real affordable housing, critical infrastructure, and environmental preservation;

WHEREAS, the demand for additional Cuesta College services in Nipomo has not been demonstrated or documented and thereby increases the difficulty in obtaining a bond for construction and fulfillment;

WHEREAS, there are alternative development plans based on formal recommendations from the EIR which maximize affordable housing and minimize environmental destruction;

WHEREAS, regarding the Dana Reserve's mitigation measures in response to the possible discovery of "human remains and items associated with Native American burials," the Northern Chumash Tribal Council's report concludes, "The Tribe considers the cumulative impacts of this Project to be substantial, and that the proposed MMs [Mitigation Measures] are not adequate to mitigate those impacts. We request that the County require a specific MM that more comprehensively considers the broader cultural geography of the Nipomo Mesa and surrounding area, specifically geared to the cumulative impacts on cultural values and regional research";

WHEREAS, the San Luis Obispo County Community College District's Land Acknowledgement reads, "We collectively acknowledge that Cuesta College occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of both the Salinan and the Northern Chumash who are the original, current, and future caretakers of the land upon which we, as guests, work, teach, and learn.";

WHEREAS, when Cuesta College Administrators speak on behalf of the Dana Reserve project at community planning meetings, they give all those in attendance at the meetings the false impression that Cuesta College is officially in support of the project;

WHEAREAS, according to statements made by the administration at Summit, Cuesta College is officially neutral on—neither supporting nor opposing—the Dana Reserve project;

RESOLVED, the Academic Senate Council informs the Board of Trustees that we are in opposition to the proposed Dana Reserve development which causes irreparable environmental harms including the destruction of 3000 mature oak trees and rare Burton Mesa Chaparral habitat and which reduces resilience to the global climate crisis;

RESOLVED, the Academic Senate calls upon Cuesta College's Trustees and Administrators to clarify, by means of a public statement, that the District is officially neutral on the Dana Reserve Project;

RESOLVED, the Academic Senate calls upon all Cuesta College's Trustees and Administrators who speak about the Dana Reserve project at any local planning meetings to begin their remarks by (a) clarifying the official neutrality of the District with regard to that project, and (b) stating clearly that they are speaking as private citizens and not in their capacity as representatives of the District.

Approved by the Academic Senate Council on 10/27/2023