

Stephanie Pincetl, PhD

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October 19, 2023

Dear Supervisors

I write to you as a former Los Angeles County Planning Commissioner, Professor at the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA, and well published author on California land use, energy transitions, water, and California policy on these topics.

This letter pertains to the proposed land development before you in Nipomo, the Dana Reserve, (*Dana Reserve Specific Plan (PLN- 1118, SUB2020-00047, LRP2020-00007, ED21-094)*) and the different alternatives.

Clearly the land developer seems to have understood the depth and breadth of community opposition to his original plan which eradicated a rare ecosystem with vague promises of mitigation or funding to environmental organizations. As per normal in these situations, the developer has offered a compromise, reducing the footprint of the proposal, but maintaining the elements that are claimed to be essential to making the development pencil out, for him, at expected market rates of return.

Because of the affordable housing crisis in the state, jurisdictions are increasingly allowing developments that offer affordable housing along side high end housing whose price is expected to produce the revenue necessary to make the project viable. The result on the ground is an entirely segregated neighborhood by income, as is obvious in the 2 alternative plans, whose organization also makes most of it predictably automobile dependent, increasing VMT.

Further, while indisputable that more habitat is protected, the best science cannot predict its long term viability as a much smaller patch. This seems to be the fate of ecosystems throughout the state where decision makers do understand that habitat preservation is important, but it often ends up being a shadow of itself, struggling to maintain its complexity under conditions of climate change and increasing human encroachment.

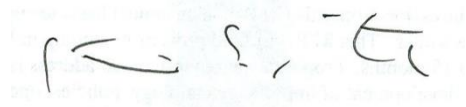
I remain skeptical of the proposed development as there are much more disturbed places in Nipomo where land development makes more sense, such as in the old town area. Sadly that does not happen to be where the land owner owns property, thus optimal place for more housing is not developed. Rather, a virgin property is transformed, further deepening the poverty of the

east side of Nipomo, its historic heart, and missing an opportunity to develop in a location where there would be much less environmental impact.

The Nipomo community that has arisen to defend the rare and ancient oak ecosystem should be applauded for caring so much about their home and the place they live in. They have come to the table to negotiate and to compromise, and their good will and commitment should be honored. They are what makes Nipomo a good place to live, simply adding more houses is not what creates community. While it is true affordable housing is scarce, this type of development approach, compensating for affordable housing with high end housing, does not forge new ground, nor provide much of a sense of place, aside from the name. Truly it is time to let the community lead about what is good for it, not the development community driven by the ROI.

Thank you for your concern about the future of Nipomo and the character and livability of the county.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Pincetl', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Stephanie Pincetl, PhD