



July 13, 2006

Supervisor Jerry Smith, Chair
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
168 West Alisal Street
Salinas, CA 93901

Subject: Review Period for General Plan Update #4 (GPU#4) and Draft EIR (DEIR)

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Board:

The Leagues of Women Voters of the Monterey Peninsula and the Salinas Valley object to the General Plan Update review and hearing process recently adopted by the Board. We urge you to modify the process to allow for adequate Planning Commission and public review.

Specifically, any process is flawed that ends Planning Commission review and hearings before the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) is issued. The Planning Commission should have its final hearings after the FEIR is published. That is the only process that will allow for the Commission's recommendations to your Board to take into account the conclusions of the FEIR. Similarly, we urge you to allow at least 60 days for the review of the latest draft of the General Plan and the Draft EIR. The scheduled 45 day review period is insufficient, given the complexity and interrelationship of the documents. While GPU#4 was available for public review in March, it has since been revised. Further, findings in the DEIR/FEIR may add complexity to the review process and result in recommended revisions to the Plan to address significant impacts.

We also urge the Board to refer GPU#4 and the DEIR to the Land Use Advisory Committees. The Area Plans have been amended significantly since they were last addressed by the Committees, and citizens should have the opportunity to comment at the local level on Area Plans prior to the Planning Commission's and Board of Supervisors' hearings.

Full public participation is imperative in any General Plan Update review process. Given the history of this county's General Plan Update process, if the Board wishes to avoid legal challenge and public distrust, now is not the time to cut corners on the public

Monterey County Board of Supervisors
Re: Review Period for GPU#4 and DEIR
July 13, 2006
Page 2 of 2

participation process. We question the need to expedite the public review process, particularly when the latest draft has taken months to prepare.

The League of Women Voters believes you have an obligation to meet the spirit as well as the letter of the law. The schedule adopted by the Board should be amended to allow the Planning Commission and the public full and meaningful participation in the process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Maxner, President
LWV of the Monterey Peninsula
PO Box 1995
Monterey, CA 93942-1995
831-649-0335

Mary Ellen Dick, President
LWV of the Salinas Valley
PO Box 1302
Salinas, CA 93902-1302
831-786-9225