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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CALAVERAS COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

REGARDING ITEM 12B OF THE AGENDA FOR 10-16-06

REGARDING THE BLUE MOUNTAIN RESIDENTIAL CENTER G.P.A.

Good morning. My name is Tom Infusino. Today I feel most unworthy to share this podium with those good people from District 2 who sat through the long meetings and forged a community of agreement. I have merely observed their journey from a distance, but I have been so touched by their exercise in democracy that I felt compelled to share this historic occasion with them today, and I thank the Board and the good people of District 2 for making this day possible.

I love my country. Here in America, when we do planning in the private or the public sector, we start with the vision of the people, and step by step we work to make that vision a reality. We do not plan like they did in the former Soviet Union, where outdated ideologues of the State dictated the goals, and the people struggled silently and hopelessly to achieve these goals. Here in the United States, in Calaveras County, we respect people's right to self-determination, we listen to their voices, and we build upon their hopes.

The planning process in District 2 has been a process of self-determination, a process with many voices, and a process filled with hope. The process included rigorous and meaningful participation from the residents. People not only expressed their ideas, they were heard and responded to. The process included the active participation of the District 2 Supervisor and Planning Commissioner, so that the people had sound guidance, and so that the Planning Commission and the Board could remain briefed and ready to approve the final product. I hope that the Board of Supervisors and Development Director Moreno will incorporate these elements into the public participation process for the rest of the General Plan Update, for this General Plan Amendment is just the first repair, on a long list of repairs, needed to the 1996 General Plan.

In January, I advised this Board on the way to go about updating the General Plan. At that time, I encouraged you to "Leave No One Behind;" to fix the General Plan for all communities. Today, by approving this General Plan Amendment, you will take the first step in that direction. Thank you for listening.

In January, I also encouraged the Board to “Establish a Level Playing Field,” so that all parties would have an incentive to participate in the General Plan Update process. Today, by approving this General Plan Amendment, you will create a level playing field in District 2, and give existing businesses, current residents, and new investors the incentive to participate and cooperate in the upcoming community planning process. Again, thank you for listening.

I hope that no member of this Board is considering voting against this General Plan Amendment today. For, if you the Board were to reject this General Plan Amendment, it would send a message of despair throughout the County. Rejecting this General Plan Amendment would undermine the rest of the General Plan Update process. People from communities outside District 2, from Copperopolis to Valley Springs, are watching to see if the Board of Supervisors is really going to respect the wishes of a community to decide its own fate. If you reject these efforts in District 2, you will tell people in communities throughout the County, that there is no reason to cooperate in the General Plan Update process, and that they should look to forums other than the Board of Supervisors for justice.

Also, if the Board rejects this General Plan Amendment today, it will send a sign to all that the Board has no intention of complying with the most basic principles of planning law. One of the most basic principles of planning law is that the General Plan text must be consistent with the General Plan Maps. (See General Plan Guidelines 2003, OPR, pp. 12-13.) The proposed General Plan Amendment simply corrects part of the General Plan Map so that it is consistent with the General Plan text. If the Board is unwilling to complete this very simple task, it will surely be unable to complete the long list of other General Plan repairs needed to comply with planning law. Again, such a signal from the Board would simply direct community groups to seek justice elsewhere.

I am confident that this Board wants to correct legal flaws in its General Plan. I am confident that this Board wants to inspire communities throughout Calaveras County to cooperate in the rest of the General Plan Update process. I am confident that this Board wants to incorporate the principles of self-determination into the rest of the General Plan Update process. I am confident that the Board will respect the wishes of the people of District 2 to establish this legal framework and planning canvas upon which they will soon sketch their vision for a brighter future. And I am confident, that the highly motivated and very creative people of District 2 will sketch a grand vision for their future as this planning process continues. I am confident that their vision for their communities will include places to work, to play, and to pray; places to buy food and fuel; and homesteads for families where children can walk through an orchard on a brisk fall morning, pick a ripe apple from the tree, take a crisp juicy bite, and taste and see the goodness of the bounty with which the Lord has so greatly blessed Calaveras County. For all these reasons, I am confident that the Board will approve this General Plan Amendment.

So today, it is my great privilege to stand with the good people of District 2 who support this General Plan Amendment.

I stand with those who want to restore lawful order to the General Plan, and I am asking you, Bill Claudino, to stand with us.

I stand with those who want to inspire communities throughout Calaveras County to cooperate in the General Plan Update process, and I am asking you, Merita Callaway, to stand with us.

I stand with those who believe that a community has a right to self-determination, and I am asking you, Tom Tryon, to stand with us.

I stand with those in District 2, and throughout the County, who want a planning framework and canvas upon which they can sketch their vision for a brighter future, and I am asking you, Victoria Erickson, to stand with us.

In support of this General Plan Amendment, I am asking you all now, to stand with us.

Please, take this opportunity to stand with us.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the good people of Calaveras County.