



City of Buellton

July 5, 2007

The Honorable Judge Rodney Melville
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
312-M East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report – Affordable Housing in Santa Barbara County:
Myth or Reality?

Dear Judge Melville:

In response to the Grand Jury Report entitled *Affordable Housing in Santa Barbara County: Myth or Reality?*, the City of Buellton provides the following comments:

Finding 3

Funding to subsidize affordable housing is limited and not keeping pace with increased costs.

Response to Finding 3

The City of Buellton agrees with Finding 3.

Finding 4

Housing Elements utilize zoning capacity and other policies to meet affordable housing requirements. However, construction of actual units is not required. Jurisdictions incur no penalty if no affordable housing units are built.

Response to Finding 4:

The City of Buellton agrees with Finding 4.

Finding 9

Non-profit organizations such as the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara, the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, People's Self-Help Housing and Habitat for Humanity play an important role in affordable housing programs.

Response to Finding 9:

The City of Buellton agrees with Finding 9.

Recommendation 1

Since there is more than one way to develop and administer affordable housing programs, jurisdictions should focus on meeting local housing needs rather than relying on one type of program (e.g., owner-occupied and rental vs. rental only).

Response to Recommendation 1:

The City of Buellton agrees with Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 2

At least annually, each jurisdiction should hold informational community meetings to explain all aspects of its affordable housing program.

Response to Recommendation 2:

The City of Buellton agrees with Recommendation 2 as it pertains to the City of Buellton. Program 21 of the City's Housing Element sets forth an annual review and information dissemination process to accomplish these objectives.

Recommendation 3

Jurisdictions should focus on developing more very low and low-income housing to meet Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals.

Response to Recommendation 3:

The City of Buellton partially agrees with Recommendation 3. Inclusionary regulations can help, but can also impede overall production. In short, providing affordable housing for the low and very low income is highly problematic and may be beyond the reach of individual cities.

Recommendation 4

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments should organize regular meetings of jurisdictional representatives to share successes and problems in affordable housing programs.

Response to Recommendation 4:

Please see the response to Finding 8.

Recommendation 5

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments should first collect data on jurisdictional performance and compare it to current Regional Housing Needs Assessments and then use this information in the next round of allocations.

Response to Recommendation 5:

The City of Buellton agrees with Recommendation 5. This already occurs, however, as part of TPAC meetings.

Recommendation 6

Jurisdictions should utilize successful non-profits as co-developers and administrators of affordable housing programs.

Response to Recommendation 6:

The City of Buellton agrees with Recommendation 6.

The City of Buellton appreciates the opportunity to respond to this Grand Jury Report.

Sincerely,


Steven L. Thompson
City Manager

c: Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury Foreman
Buellton City Council