

Alan Cook
341 Howard Heights Road
Freshwater, CA 95503
707 444-8953

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Mr. Thomas Herman, Chairman
Planning Commission, County of Humboldt
825 Fifth Street, Room 111
Eureka, California 95501

Subject: General Plan Update

I moved to Humboldt County in 1975 and purchased my current residence at 341 Howard Heights Road in Freshwater in 1994. My plan was to live in Freshwater for fifty years. I now have 37 years remaining.

I believe the best use of the majority of the land in Freshwater is the growing of redwood forests. If the forest is well managed and harvested at a rate that considers our steep hill sides and erosion-prone soils, we can contribute to a stable and healthy timber industry. But the harvest rates must be modest, such as 0.5 - 1% per year, in order for the timber operations and the downstream residential communities to peacefully coexist.

In Freshwater, the residents' ability to coexist with timber interests was abruptly disrupted during the mid-1990s by massive increases in Pacific Lumber's harvest rate and the equally massive increases in flooding that followed. The story was the same in Elk River. Conflict was long and heated between the Pacific Lumber Company and owners of property which was damaged or under continual threat from new levels of flooding.

Ultimately, the link between harvest rates and flooding were clearly validated: in the enormous administrative records produced by petitions to state and federal agencies, in results of specially convened scientific panels, AND in PL's own business plan. But PL is still being allowed to harvest rates which will maintain the current level of damage. Recovery of the watershed won't happen in my remaining 37 years. So for many of us who live in the watersheds impaired by industrial timber, there is no resolution, and no forgetting the cause of the threats we live with every winter.

With this in mind, it seems only right that Tom Herman, who figured so prominently in this tragedy, should recuse himself from any policy-making which benefits industrial timber companies with whom he has associations. Even if he were capable of objectivity, there is a pervasive perception that he belongs to big timber.

I also ask for support of Option A, which provides the best protection for TPZ lands in Freshwater and increases the potential for a viable timber industry in perpetuity. This would be a welcome change from the boom and bust that is sadly playing out in Pacific Lumber's domain as we speak.

Respectfully,



Alan Cook