

Humboldt County Planning Commission  
Humboldt County Courthouse  
Eureka, California 95501

Re: General Plan Land Use Element Chapter 5 (September 20, 2007)

Dear Commissioners:

A couple things stuck in my craw after your last meeting on the General Plan, and over the last month my concerns have been re-enforced.

I see formation of the General Plan review being driven by thinking that lacks an understanding of forestry and land ownership matters.

With a group of folks pushing for Mr. Herman to not be involved and this same group saying county's Forest Review Committee should only give technical input, whatever that means, I see an effort to muzzle experienced forester and experienced landowner advice and input. Ask yourselves "If you eliminate Mr. Herman, other foresters, or for that matter anyone who might have a financial interest in the outcome of the General Plan, how will decisions be without bias against the use of natural resources and not be based on inadequate input?"

With the General Plan being full of technical land use conclusions and the State of California requiring forestry work to be done by a California Registered Professional Forester (RPF), I find the attempt to muzzle advice provided by experienced foresters and experienced landowners to be without a legitimate basis and out of line.

Without the clarification provided by foresters Herman and Rynerson, the group pushing to muzzle input may have been able to pull off their attempt to erroneously present TPZ zoning and associated soil rent and removal yield tax as a subsidy situation.

While it may make some folks feel good that those who wish to not harvest timber such as some land trusts and others handling no-cut preserves, conservation easements, and carbon credit schemes do not have to pay the removal tax, this situation is not a good thing for everyone. It needs to be understood how these taxes are a significant cost factor for those who do harvest timber, and as such, these taxes are not neutral taxes. With upward adjustments for higher markets and a lack of accompanying adjustments for increasing operational and regulatory costs, these taxes are becoming more and more a disincentive to the harvesting of timber.

As a significant cost, these taxes reduce the income from the land which hinders the financial ability and desire of private timber owners to hold onto open space lands as open space. Additionally, as a disincentive to timber harvesting, these taxes promote a reduction in community economic supports (jobs, business, and taxes), provide an impediment to affordable housing, and mean more dependence on imported wood products which are routinely produced to the detriment of the third world.

Without experienced and knowledgeable review and input, the impacts of historical and site specific factors involving landownership goals, physical land features, county's permitting processes, and required application of a multitude of state, federal, and various special district environmental and development laws will be missed, and this will result in a potentially damaging General Plan.

To continue with my attempts to help you better understand what is at stake, especially for farmers and ranchers, I have provided a copy of Chapter Nine "The Last Bale" (five short pages) from my book, which I have already provided you, along with another copy of my flow chart. Since it will cost you little time and it is free, you folks really have no excuse to not read the provided book chapter. It might bring a tear to your eye.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles L. Ciancio".

Charles L. Ciancio  
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