



Humboldt County Farm Bureau

5601 So. Broadway, Eureka, CA 95503
Serving Agriculture Since 1913

September 20, 2007

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: County of Humboldt General Plan Update

Chapter 5.2. Agricultural Resources

Good Evening Commissioners and Chairman Herman:

My name is Jay Russ, I am currently serving as Vice president of the Humboldt County Farm Bureau.

I would first like to thank you, your staff and other members of the public for the significant efforts involved with this daunting task. We applaud you for your efforts.

This has been a very difficult process for us: the Humboldt County Farm Bureau. I say difficult because we continually try to strike a balance between maintaining property rights and asset values associated with agricultural land ownership and its conservation.

We believe that we have a weighted opinion because our directors are all actively involved in resource production and feel the financial effects of policy changes.

Recently the Humboldt County Farm Bureau submitted detailed written comments to the County, not endorsing a specific Plan Alternative but offering direction from the agricultural community. It is our concern that agriculture remain a very high priority with the county. It is primarily agriculture that developed this county and still provides benefits that are sometimes taken for granted, clean water, clean air, healthy food and productive open spaces.

Tonight I will very briefly summarize our previously submitted comments.

We believe that the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive 'No Net Loss of Agricultural Lands' program is necessary to protect AE zoned lands. Public recreation and restoration is not a valid replacement for agriculture.

We see a need for the collection and presentation of considerably more material concerning 'entitlements', perceived 'conversions', certificates of compliance and existing rural development practices. This is essential for making decisions that are based upon real data.

We urge the Commission to reconsider the current rules, regulations and practices, and evaluate their effectiveness, concerning rural land development prior to the enactment of new land use restrictions or other regulatory controls.

We ask the Commission to review the financial feasibility of the actual implementation of any new or expanded regulatory program or activity prior to its enactment.

It is our challenge to the Commission to balance Humboldt County's agricultural needs between maintaining property rights and asset values associated with agricultural land ownership and its conservation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Jay Russ
Vice President
Humboldt County Farm Bureau