

U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy April 19, 2002

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, San Pedro

My name is Kathleen Burr. I am the executive director for the Los Angeles County Farm Bureau and I would like to thank Admiral Watkins & the commission for the opportunity to speak to you today as it relates to agriculture in the coastal zones of California. I would like to update everyone on a few agricultural facts:

- The State of California produces **50% of all the fresh fruit, vegetables, and nuts produced in the United States.**
- Farmers of today are not only environmentalists but also conservationists – their productivity has increased with less water use, less pesticide and they are truly the first stewards of the land.
- A great number of farmers & ranchers provide habitat and feeding grounds for endangered species and migratory birds.
- **I must stress that they are concerned about the health & safety of the food they produce, as well as, preserving the environment – land, air and water shed they use to produce it.**

My concern today is the direction that the current coastal commission is taking – that of anti-agriculture and anti-animal agriculture as evidenced by the current LCP for the city of Malibu and potentially same LCP blue print for the State of California coastal cities. As you know the coastal communities are rich in agricultural production up and down the coast which is due to extremely fertile soil and a pleasing climate.

As laid out in the coastal commissions LCP blue print – we have requested that separate regulations for agriculture be set aside from new development. To include agriculture in new development would put untold restrictions on agriculture thus eliminating its future and financial viability. We need to assure that agriculture will not be impacted with permits; review, EIR's and other requirements that would make continued agriculture operations unprofitable.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas or ESHA's – an ESHA is deemed something special and sensitive – not every land mass in an entire city. The issue of coastal sage scrub – grows in many areas inland. We feel that the coastal commission has not used sound science in determining these ESHA's. The County of Los Angeles senior biologist does not agree with the commission's designation of all the ESHA areas. When ESHA's are based on sound science, scientific fact with accurate results – then that is something the farming and ranching community can live with.

To limit a farmer or rancher from his given right to farm his land – is unthinkable. Yet, he is required to pay taxes on land he is completely restricted from using.

We are alarmed at the total lack of land use changes – **none**. A landowner should be allowed to take his land and use it for grazing, growing wine grapes, avocados, fruit trees, breeding horses or any agricultural use.

The coastal zone is home to an extreme number of different commodities as well as a huge equestrian population. The loss of this agricultural economy would cost California in the billions.

The coastal commission has written into this blue print a subjective statement that states **lands which are "covered periodically" with shallow water are wetlands**. This must be outlined specifically otherwise almost any pasture or field which holds any amount of water could be deemed a wetland.

Confined animal facilities – the outlined regulations are not feasible. By the time you untangle the various policies – you have no idea where you stand in this blue print LCP. Besides, different management practices utilized make a huge difference in how many animals a site can handle safely, including consideration of non-point source pollution.

We feel the coastal commission's direction is un-workable as it stands now. I believe that executive order 12866 from President Clinton relates:

- "the American people deserve a regulatory system that works for them, not against them: a regulatory system that protects and improves their health, safety, environment and well being and improves the performance of the economy without imposing unacceptable or unreasonable costs on society; regulatory policies that recognize that the private sector and private markets are the best engine for economic growth; **and most important - regulations are effective, consistent, sensible, and understandable.**

It will be an extremely sad day when the farmer-rancher-equestrian becomes the endangered species and we are at the mercy of governmental agencies that in the name of protecting our environment to such an extreme - that we are not allowed to enjoy what is rightfully ours.

I would hate to see the day that agriculture is banned from California and we are at the mercy of other countries for our food – where they can set any price they deem and growing conditions are not strictly watched. I feel we must continue to search for the sound science – the correct answers – sitting down at the table together with a common goal in mind. Preserving the environment - along with preserving agriculture.

I would be extremely happy to host a coastal agricultural tour for the commission at any time.

Thank you.

Kathleen Burr
Executive Director
Los Angeles County Farm Bureau
1006 W. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, CA 93534
Phone – 661-948-6571
Fax – 661-949-3251
E-mail – lacfb@aol.com