

August 6, 2009

The Honorable Joe Simitian
State Senator
State Capitol, Room 2080
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 211

Dear Senator Simitian:

I am writing to convey the decision of the Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to oppose Senate Bill 211, which concerns the formation process for a regional open space and park district in Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz LAFCO believes that the district formation process as currently specified in the Public Resources Code is preferable. The current process allows a regional park and open space district to be initiated by a petition signed by 5000 voters and reviewed at a local hearing conducted by LAFCO. SB 211 would delete these two steps thus lowering the public involvement in the process and avoiding the LAFCO analysis and public discussion of fiscal feasibility and organizational alternatives.

Santa Cruz LAFCO's opposition to the bill solely concerns the district formation process and not the merits of setting up a district in Santa Cruz County. The sponsor of the bill, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, has an excellent record of land stewardship and laudable goals. If presented with an application to form an open space district, Santa Cruz LAFCO would give careful consideration to the proposal.

Very truly yours,

Patrick M. McCormick
Executive Officer

cc:

Senator Abel Maldonado, 15th District
Senator Patricia Wiggins, Senate Local Government Committee Chair
Assembly Member Anna Caballero, Assembly Local Government Committee Chair
Assembly Member Bill Monning, 27th District
Peter Detwiler, Staff to Senate Local Government Committee
Katie Kolitsos, Staff to Assembly Local Government Committee
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
California Association of LAFCOs
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
Cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Watsonville
Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau