



# County of Santa Barbara

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Policies and Procedures

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POLICY NO. 2009-1

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2009

SUBJECT: Exemption of Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Sponsored Projects from County Grading and Land Use Permit Requirements

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On August 16, 2005, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Ordinance No. 4573 which amended Chapter 14 of the County Code to exempt NRCS sponsored Federal Cost-Share projects from Grading and Land Use Permit requirements.

The question has arisen as to whether this Ordinance Applies not only to Federal Cost Share but also to Federal Non-Cost Share projects as well. It has been brought to the attention of the County by the NRCS that all projects managed by NRCS as Federal Cost Share and Federal Non-Cost Share are reviewed and approved using an identical process required by these programs (Attached letter dated may 7, 2009).

Given the fact that these projects are reviewed with the identical process, it shall be the Director's Determination that all NRCS projects (Cost Share and Non-Cost Share) that comply with Ordinance No. 4573 shall be exempt from County Grading and Land Use Permit requirements.

  
JOHN BAKER, Director  
Planning & Development

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Santa Maria Service Center  
920 E. Stowell Road  
Santa Maria, CA 93454-7008

Telephone (805) 928-9269  
Fax (805) 928-9644

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May 7, 2009

Mr. John Baker, Director  
Planning and Development  
County of Santa Barbara  
123 E. Anapamu St.  
Santa Barbara, Ca 93101

Dear Mr. Baker:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify how the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reviews and approves restoration projects on private land that are designed to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat.

All restoration projects to be managed by NRCS as Federal Cost Share or Non-Cost Share shall be reviewed and approved using an identical process required by these programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, projects under the Conservation Reserve Program, (CRP), the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) and/or the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).

All projects, if approved by NRCS, shall have a finding of no significant adverse impact under the National Environmental Policy Act and shall be conducted pursuant to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices, consistent with the mandated nine-step planning process, including post installation field assessment.

I hope this provides clarification of the process, and we look forward to working with the County of Santa Barbara on future restoration projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bechtold", is written over a horizontal line.

John Bechtold  
District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS

Cc: Bill Gillette, Ag Commissioner