Community Renewable Solutions LLC
Reducing emissions. Saving money.

Gaviota Planning Advisory Committee
Office of Long Range Planning
30 E Figueroa St, 2nd Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

April 7, 2010

Subject: Renewable energy in the Gaviota Coastal Plan

Dear Planning Advisory Committee,

Climate change represents the single biggest environmental threat of our time – perhaps of all of human history. It will require significant and sustained effort to mitigate the worst impacts that climate scientists project will occur if we continue on our current unsustainable path. Energy efficiency and renewable energy are major tools for achieving these emissions reductions.

I was the lead author of the Community Environmental Council's blueprint for Santa Barbara County to wean itself from fossil fuels: *A New Energy Direction* (available at www.cecsb.org). After serving as CEC's Energy Program Director for four and half years, I left CEC a year ago to take a more active role in the renewable energy transition – implementing key pieces of what I recommended to our community as a whole through my non-profit advocacy.

My company, Community Renewable Solutions LLC, was created to help mitigate climate change impacts, grow local jobs, and promote local economies more generally, by developing "community-scale" renewable energy projects. Wind and solar projects in this niche – between one and twenty megawatts – require anywhere from five to five hundred acres. The community-scale renewable energy model attempts to transfer the European model for wind and solar to the U.S. The European model, best exemplified in Denmark, Sweden and Germany, results in numerous wind and solar farms dotted around the countryside. These projects are not so big to shock our aesthetic sense or our conscience, but big enough to make a serious impact in fossil fuel energy consumption.

These community-scale projects also act as a reminder of the energy we use and the fact that all energy production has an impact on our environment – whether or not it is generally "out of sight, out of mind," as is the case with much of our current electricity consumption in California (more than half of the greenhouse gas emissions

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from our electricity consumption comes from out-of-state coal and natural gas facilities, according to a recent state-wide report).

For example, a typical Danish wind farm consists of 5-8 wind turbines that may reach 300 feet high. Similarly, my company is planning, with our partners, including Pacific Wind Power and Clipper Windpower, both based in Santa Barbara County, a number of 10-20 megawatt wind farms that would consist of 1-10 turbines at each location. We feel that this scale of project will be welcomed by our communities as a real contribution to our local economies and to mitigation of climate change – without being so large as to arouse the ire of neighbors.

Similarly, we are planning a number of solar projects in the two to twenty megawatt range, which require from 12 to 160 acres of open space. Solar projects are even less impactful on communities because they are low to the ground and often have no moving parts. They do, however, require more land area than wind turbines because wind turbines take up more vertical space whereas solar farms take up more horizontal space.

We are writing to GavPAC now to request that no additional barriers be placed on community-scale wind or solar farms on the Gaviota Coast. We are aware of the sensitive nature of this beautiful coastline – indeed we live in this area and regularly take the time to appreciate this coastline. Any projects we build in this area will be designed and constructed to ensure that no undue impacts result. The County's CEQA process is highly rigorous and we are confident that the existing process for permitting wind and solar projects will ensure the optimal design and construction of our projects.

We would be happy to provide any additional testimony and/or presentations on this issue if desired by GavPAC.

Sincerely,

Tam Hunt, J.D.
Managing Member