

Attachment A

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND ISSUE SUMMARY

Santa Barbara County Uniform Rules Update

A. PROJECT APPLICANT

Santa Barbara County Planning and Development
Comprehensive Planning Division
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

B. PROJECT LOCATION

The *Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones* (Uniform Rules) apply to agricultural and open space lands with the appropriate zone district enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program throughout the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County. Approximately 550,000 acres of agricultural land is currently enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program, which represents roughly 73% of the total agricultural land in the County.

C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Uniform Rules is the set of rules by which Santa Barbara County administers its Agricultural Preserve Program under the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, better known as the Williamson Act. The Uniform Rules outline the requirements for land participating in the Agricultural Preserve Program, including eligibility requirements, residential allowances, compatible uses, and administrative provisions for terminating or amending contracts.

The Uniform Rules Update proposes changes to several aspects of the Uniform Rules in order to 1) bring the Uniform Rules into conformance with recent legislative amendments to the Williamson Act; 2) address discrepancies in the Uniform Rules that were identified in a 2001 audit by the California Department of Conservation (DOC); and 3) increase the clarity and flexibility of the Uniform Rules to expand and ensure continued participation in the Agricultural Preserve Program. Additionally, the Update proposes reformatting the Uniform Rules to make them more user-friendly. Below is a general description of some of the major changes being proposed. The complete draft of proposed Uniform Rule changes is provided as Attachment B.

The primary additions to the Uniform Rules to bring them into conformance with the Williamson Act as it has been amended over the past twenty years, include incorporating principles of compatibility from the Act that provide guidelines to be considered when evaluating the compatibility of non-agricultural uses; updating the definition of recreational use to require that land be in its “agricultural or natural state”; incorporating the findings that must be made to

allow a lot line adjustment on contracted land; and adding the appropriate findings and procedures required for contract cancellations.

In responding to the 2001 DOC audit, the Uniform Rules proposes eliminating sanitary fill waste disposal facilities and golf courses as compatible uses on contracted land; providing a rationale for inclusion of superprime parcels into the Agricultural Preserve Program; and clarifying size eligibility requirements for parcels and preserves.

Many of the proposed changes to the Uniform Rules are in an effort to increase the clarity and flexibility of the Uniform Rules. Some of these notable proposed changes include additional land use designations and zoning districts that are eligible for enrollment in the Agricultural Preserve Program; addition of allowance for lot line adjustments to add smaller parcels to existing contracts; changes to residential allowances to provide more housing opportunities; revised agricultural production and reporting requirements to ensure the integrity of the Agricultural Preserve Program is maintained; allowance for increased development envelopes on superprime land if more land is devoted to agricultural production; increase in the flexibility of facilities preparing and processing agricultural products; clarification of the restrictions and requirements associated with animal boarding and breeding; and the addition of an allowance for small scale guest ranches subject to certain requirements.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREAS

The environmental impact report will analyze the proposed changes to the Uniform Rules to assess the significance of any resulting impacts and where necessary recommend mitigation measures. It will also evaluate the potential impacts for several alternatives to the proposed Uniform Rules including a no project alternative. Key areas where potentially significant impacts may arise are to agricultural resources, visual resources, land use and traffic.