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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE

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April 2, 2002

Jerry Backoff, Director
Planning Division
Development Services Department
City of San Marcos
1 Civic Center Drive
San Marcos, CA 92069-2949

**Re: SAN MARCOS HIGHLANDS SEIR 90-13, SPECIFIC PLAN
MODIFICATION (MOD)/SP 89/16 (98MOD) AND TENTATIVE
SUBDIVISION MAP TSM408/ND 99-503**

Dear Mr. Backoff:

On January 16, 2002 (3), the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors took an action for staff to investigate the proposed pending cities' annexations and any impacts on the General Plan process to ensure that (1) the proposed cities' annexations do not interfere with the outcome of the General Plan 2020 process; and (2) the County can preserve the integrity of the unincorporated territory through the completion of the General Plan process. The proposed San Marcos Highlands project requires the annexation of County lands into the City of San Marcos and therefore, is being reviewed by the County for conformance with the County's existing and proposed General Plan 2020 densities.

The current General Plan for the County of San Diego shows the density in the proposed development area of San Marcos Highlands as one dwelling unit per 2 or 4 acres depending on slope. The General Plan 2020 Process proposes a density of one dwelling unit per ten (10) acres for this area due to the rugged terrain and biological sensitivity. The proposed project far exceeds this density with a planned range of 2.9 - 5.5 dwelling units per acre. Therefore, this project is in conflict with the existing County General Plan and would interfere with the outcome of the General Plan 2020 process threatening the integrity of the unincorporated territory.

In addition, the land under consideration is a relatively large block of habitat containing sensitive biological resources including riparian and coastal sage scrub habitats that support a range of wildlife species. The development of a plan to protect these sensitive resources is currently underway; the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) North County Subarea Plan. The County believes that annexation of these lands to the City of San Marcos would create a significant negative impact to the County's North County MSCP Subarea Plan associated with habitat loss and blockage of a viable wildlife corridor.

For the reasons stated above, the County of San Diego cannot support the proposed annexation of these lands to the City of San Marcos.

If you should have questions or comments, please contact me at 858-694-2962.

Sincerely,



GARY L. PRYOR

Director, Department of Planning and Land Use

cc: Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Members
Michael D. Ott, LAFCO, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 452, San Diego, CA 92101
Nancy Gilbert, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, CA 92008
William E. Tippetts, CA Department of Fish & Game, 4949 Viewridge Avenue, San Diego, CA 92122
Twin Oaks Valley Sponsor Group, P.O. Box 455, San Marcos, CA 92079-0455
Mary H. Clarke, Friends of Hacienda Creek, 1529 El Paseo Drive, San Marcos CA 92069
Michael Beck, San Diego Director, Endangered Habitats League, P.O. Box 1509, Julian, CA 92036