Crisis in the Community: The Affordable Housing Shortage in California
By David Smith

This paper explores how land use and housing policies have discriminated against marginalized groups, creating a lack of affordable housing and resulting in economic and social segregation. Smith supports the contention that the lack of affordable housing is not an economic problem, but a political determination: policy makers do not choose to prioritize affordability when new housing is developed.

Disclaimer: The views of David Smith are not necessarily those of LandWatch Monterey County.

The lack of affordable housing has led to a serious crisis in Monterey County. Many workers must now commute long distances, increasing traffic and decreasing quality of life. Groups of low-income residents live in unhealthy, substandard living situations because they must share living spaces (County 2002). Large disparities exist between the income of the average worker in Monterey County and the average cost of a home. In fact, a 2002 study commissioned by Congress found Monterey County to be the least affordable county in the United States (Group 2003). Monterey County’s housing crisis is serious and urgent especially considering that the economic vitality of Monterey County depends on providing affordable housing for its workers. According to the 2002 General Plan Update, county employers report that housing prices make it increasingly difficult to retain and attract employees in the county area. In addition, existing workers in Monterey County’s two largest industries, agriculture and tourism, find it nearly impossible to afford housing (County 2002).

The fact that many Monterey County residents cannot find housing is not a surprise. Today as throughout much of California’s history land use and housing policies have excluded many racial and social groups from housing markets. In many localities, land use policies, outright discriminatory housing policies, significant population growth coupled with reduced housing supply, and the lack of sufficient housing policies have led to housing prices that have become well out the reach for many citizens.

These policies and practices have also resulted in economic and social segregation. According to Massey and Denton, authors of American Apartheid: segregation and the making of the Underclass, “…residential segregation is the principal organizational feature of American society responsible for the creation of the [urban] underclass(Massey & Denton 1993).” For many California residents this is certainly true. In Salinas, for example, exclusion from home ownership means multiple families sharing living space within a single family home, which subjects residents to unhealthy living standards (Garcia 2003). For others, California’s housing crisis continues to force people to live in less inhabitable areas. In Los Angeles, many African Americans and Latinos could only afford homes near toxic waste-emitting factories in towns where whites use to live and work, but abandoned as they im-
proved their socioeconomic status (Austin & Schill 1994).

While economic segregation erodes a sense of community, maintaining and perpetuating a sense of community is critical for achieving greater social justice, allowing everyone to live on a level playing field. By sense of community I mean the notion that a neighborhood or a region’s quality of life depends on the everyday contribution from the broader membership of society. That is, I believe that my quality of life, the fact that I can live everyday comfortably, depends on the quality of life of others—farm workers, teachers, police and firefighters, all who serve the community. I don’t believe that I am entirely a product of my own individuality. Rather, I am a product created mostly by the community in which I live. Since I depend on the contributions of others, I believe I have a responsibility to ensure that everyone else, regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation can realize their fullest potential. Everyone should have the same opportunities in life, to become who they want to become. A Mexican American or Latino farm worker family living in East Salinas, for example, should have the opportunity to provide their children with the same level of education that students in Carmel receive. Their family should not have to live with five others in a single-family home in order to have shelter.

My strong belief in creating and maintaining a sense of community guided this Historically Informed Political Project (HIPP). I chose to work with LandWatch Monterey County, a grassroots non-profit organization, whose mission is to “promote and inspire sound land use policy through grass roots community action.” Their mission actually seeks more than it says. LandWatch works to promote greater social equity and to protect the natural environment by advocating for affordable housing and growth control policies, such as inclusionary housing policies (which mandate a specific percentage of affordable housing within each new development), and urban growth boundaries. More important, LandWatch hopes to promote such policies through community choice in decision-making. LandWatch actively seeks to involve community members in local meetings where important policy-level decisions will be made, as well as events that better inform citizens about land use policy. It gives community members the tools to become stronger and more effective advocates for policies that will make Monterey County a better place to live. Their role in the community is particularly important, especially in the realm of affordable housing where the issue is less about the economics of supply and demand, more about political will.

Like LandWatch, Frank Bardacke, author of Good Liberals and Great Blue Herons, believes that the lack of affordable housing, and the segregation and erosion of community that it causes, is a political rather than an economic issue (Bardacke 1994). Specifically, the problem of affordable housing is one driven by and sometimes exacerbated by the choices made at the policy level. He describes the frustrating experience of witnessing an affordable housing crisis in the mostly low-income community of Watsonville. Local decision-makers ignore a potential solution: taking an underused municipal airport with little economic value and converting the land to provide much needed affordable housing. If the community members cannot afford homes, it makes
perfect sense to convert this land. Unfortunately, Watsonville officials have neglected to take a leadership role and make a land use choice to benefit residents.

Bardacke accurately asserts that the affordable housing shortage is a political issue because policies reflect choice. Politics, after all, are the debate and discussion about what we should do as a community (Patton 2003). Affordable housing is a political term defined by community choice; it’s about whether or not residents want to use available resources to increase housing opportunities for the whole community. Do residents of Seaside, California want to build more golf courses with the land that is available to them? To view politics as debate and discussion about our options would empower the residents of Seaside to make that decision. It would provide a choice for residents to decide whether to use that land for affordable housing or golf. Gary Patton, executive director of LandWatch Monterey County, asserts, “we can choose individually, and we make choices as a community. Above all, we can choose to make changes in what we are doing, and that means that the future depends on our choices and not on some inevitable trend (or historical theme) or not what is happening now (Gary Patton & Staff 2002)”.

**HIPP Purpose and Background**

I think the best way to resist inevitable trends is to adopt policies that combat those trends. As Patton explained, the decisions communities and elected officials make reflect choice, not chance (Patton & Staff 2002). Therefore, this political project is an attempt to advocate for a specific set of policies, as recommended by Congressman Sam Farr regarding affordable housing at Fort Ord, and to help build the political will needed to adopt those policies. The Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) is a local agency whose purpose is to guide the reuse of the former Fort Ord. Farr’s recommendations to FORA are essentially inclusionary policies, which make any new development approval contingent on whether or not those policies are met. He is urging the adoption of a policy that would permanently require fifty percent of the new homes built on Fort Ord to be provided for very low, low, and moderate-income residents of Monterey County. This policy will take a decisive step forward in solving Monterey’s housing crisis.

I worked with LandWatch by assisting staff to organize and communicate with community members regarding affordable housing at Fort Ord. Building political will for FORA to adopt Farr’s policies means informing the public and

**Table 1:** The following definitions are based off the current median income in Monterey County of $57,100. Income category definitions come from the current Housing Element of the Monterey County General Plan and from Farr’s recommendations.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Income category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Percentage Set Aside in Congressman Farr’s recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>0-50% of median income</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>50-80% of median income</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Workforce</td>
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mobilizing them to participate at important meetings. It is very difficult for decision-makers to make the wrong decision in the face of a well-informed and determined public (Patton 2003). This involves speaking with and sending letters and emails to community members to keep them informed regarding the political process and how they can speak out in favor of Farr’s policies at important FORA board meetings.

The former Fort Ord is perhaps the last best opportunity to provide affordable housing to Monterey County workers and residents through the adoption of an inclusionary policy. Proposed developments on Fort Ord must be consistent with the Fort Ord Reuse Authority’s (FORA) Base Reuse Plan, which guides usage at a policy level (Authority 2003). In short, the FORA board of directors can amend the Base Reuse Plan to contain a policy that mandates a specific percentage of affordable housing for new developments.

Congressman Farr’s policies simply ask that members of the FORA board do more than the minimum to provide affordable housing at the former Fort Ord. Currently Fort Ord is a redevelopment area, which in California means that a particular area is “blighted” and that local agencies must take measure to reverse that deterioration. But more importantly, California Community Redevelopment Law (CRCL) requires 15 percent of the homes built in a “blighted” area be provided at affordable prices (Agency 2003). By requiring an inclusionary policy that substantially exceeds the California state minimum for affordable housing, Farr is essentially asking FORA Board members to take a serious and decisive step towards solving Monterey County’s housing crisis.

Historical Overview: Exclusion, Inclusion, and Political Activism

Patricia Nelson Limerick, in the introduction to Something in the Soil, describes four broad themes to understanding California History. These four themes are Conquest, Continuity, Convergence and Complexity. Describing the American West as morally complex, she says: “human beings can be a mess—contentious, conflict loving, petty, vindictive, and cruel—and human beings can manifest grace, dignity, compassion and understanding in ways that leave us breathless (Limerick 2000)”. The theme of complexity describes housing issues in California most accurately. California residents have been cruel, petty and contentious by excluding economic and social groups from housing markets. However Californians can show compassion through the creation and implementation of inclusionary housing policies, which work to integrate excluded economic and social groups in housing markets. Historically, Californians have also showed incredible “grace, compassion and dignity” by organizing together to successfully fight for ideologically similar causes.

Exclusion from Housing Markets

Exclusion of economic and social groups from housing markets is a dominant theme in California history and continues to this day. Many of these exclusionary practices, unfortunately, were intentional and overtly discriminating against different economic and social groups. In Flaw in the Jewel: Housing Discrimination Against Jews in La Jolla, California author Mary Ellen Stratthaus carefully describes how public policy excluded Jewish residents from living in
one of Southern California’s ritziest areas in the 1950’s. One of the major reasons for such atrocious exclusion, she asserts, is that residents feared the presence of Jewish and other minority residents would deteriorate property value. Such fear-driven public policy, she then adds, forced Jewish residents to migrate to Rancho Santa Fe, a housing development north of La Jolla (Stratthaus 1996).

Not that social integration was on anyone’s agenda from the 1920’s to the 50’s, but in a sense, flagrant discrimination against Jewish residents resulted from a lack of public policy that could have prevented such exclusion from living in a given area. In La Jolla, developers and realtors were allowed to freely design and market homes to a particularly narrow range of people. One La Jolla development, for instance, “advertised its February 18, 1926, grand opening by identifying La Jolla Shores as an exclusive seaside residential district where race restrictions, of course, are in force.” In addition, according to Stratthaus, La Jolla had an unwritten understanding, a "gentlemen's agreement” that excluded Jews from purchasing homes. This agreement was a result of La Jolla residents having a disheartening fear towards social integration; they believed that integration would result in the "'downgrading” of the neighborhood (Stratthaus 1996).

In Monterey County, housing exclusion was just as overtly racist as in La Jolla. In the late nineteenth century developers excluded various racial groups from housing developments through restrictive deeds. In Del Rey Oaks, for example, a deed restriction would read as follows: “No Mongolian, Hindus, Malays, Negroes or Philippinos shall use or occupy any building on any lot except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants (Walton 2001).” The Del Monte Properties Company, one of the largest landowners in the history of the city of Monterey, had similar restrictions: “Said premises shall not...at any time be occupied or sued by Asiatics, Negroes or any person born in the Turkish Empire, nor any lin- eal descendant of such person(Walton 2001).”

But overt residential discrimination was not the only practice that led to the exclusionary housing situation. Growth control policies have had a significant impact on California’s history and housing crisis. These measures to maintain or regulate the amount of urban growth have been used in many localities, both perpetuating and worsening the exclusion of economic and social groups from housing markets. The state has historically promoted growth since the late 19th century (McWilliams 1973) and so it makes sense that citizens would eventually want power to control that growth. Residents particularly want to have control over growth to protect the natural resources and scenic vistas that make California a unique place to live. Because of this passion for protecting the environment, local cities and counties have enacted more growth control measures than any other state in the US (Calavita & Grimes 1998).

However measures to control such growth have consequences. Ned Levine is a consultant who has studied the effects of growth controls on housing production. He states that growth control measures can raise the cost of construction through development requirements, limit the supply of new housing (and thus increase market price), and affect housing prices by improving the quality of life in a city through limiting population growth (Levine 1999). According
to Levine, jurisdictions that enacted more growth control measures show (Levine 1999):

- A smaller increase in population between 1980 and 1990
- A smaller increase in the total non-white population
- A smaller increase in the American Indian population
- A smaller increase in the black population
- And a smaller increase in the Hispanic population

The Trend of Population Growth and its Effect on Housing Prices Resulting in Social and Economic Exclusion

Before the early 1970’s, home prices in California were similar to that of the national average but heavy immigration during the 1970s and through the 1980s drastically speeded the housing crisis Californians face today. Large population increases coupled with the housing industry’s inability to produce more units caused home prices to skyrocket. In the 1980s Californian’s population grew by over 6 billion people, the largest decadal increase by any state in the US (Levine 1999). As California’s population grew so did the housing prices. Between 1970 and 1990 gross rent prices rose 436 percent and homes prices increased 736 percent while median income increased by 316 percent (Office 2003). Simply, the growth of the California population and the lack of housing supply caused market prices to become out of reach for a significantly large portion of California’s population (Housing & California 2003).

From Exclusion to Inclusion

California history does not have to be viewed as entirely awful and hopeless as exemplified by the theme of exclusion and the inevitable population growth trend towards apocalypse. Themes in California history can also offer hope, and inspiration. Limerick stresses, for example, that Western history is morally complex—that people do awful, cruel things that make little sense today but at the same time do things with “grace” and breathlessness”. This is true as California is among one of the first states in the US to create and establish inclusionary housing policies, which mandate that a specific percentage of affordable housing be built with each new housing development. For many, these policies are the best and perhaps only means to provide affordable housing in California (Calavita & Grimes 1998).

Inclusionary housing policies and programs in California, along with growth control measures, were first created and implemented in the 1970s. But first there were steps along the way to inspiring the establishment of the first inclusionary policies in California. Petaluma, for example, created a growth control measure that limited the amount of residential units developers could build annually. But at the same time, and with the understanding that growth-controls could limit housing supply and increase housing prices, Petaluma established a system that awarded points to proposed projects that included affordable units. This point system, in effect, gave priority to developers who could build a higher percentage of affordable units (Housing & California 2003). Similarly, the city of Irvine experienced the same type of growth situation as Petaluma. The only difference between Irvine and Petaluma is that the creation of a specific percentage of affordable housing units
resulted from a legal challenge. In 1975 a lawsuit challenged the adequacy of Environmental Impact Report (EIR) regarding the rezoning of 2,058 acres to industrial development. Many residents were concerned that the development would create more jobs and not enough low and moderate income housing for the area. As a result of the lawsuit, the developer was required to produce 700 units of low and moderate-income housing. Subsequently, a few years later, and after another lawsuit that challenged the County’s housing element, Orange County adopted the first inclusionary program, albeit voluntary, in California (Calavita & Grimes 1998).

Inclusionary policies in California later became effective tools for reaching goals of the state-mandated General Plan and housing element. A General Plan is an internally consistent land use blueprint or land use constitution (Patton 2003), meaning that developments that do not meet the policies, goals, and objectives stated in the General Plan cannot be approved. In addition, a General Plan is composed of different “elements” such as land use, housing, conservation, open-space, and safety (Grisson et al 1990). The housing element of the General Plan is a critical component in the use of inclusionary policies of meeting goals to provide affordable housing. The housing element is a “comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community and region. It sets forth local housing policies and programs to implement those policies (Grisson et al 1990).”

In 1975, the housing element statute was revised and strengthened under the Housing and Finance Act, which granted the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to adopt guidelines and provisions for the state-mandated Housing Element. These guidelines included the use of inclusionary housing policies, but on an advisory rather than mandatory basis. In other words, counties and cities could use inclusionary housing policies to meet goals in the housing elements but were not necessarily required to do so.

Nevertheless, the voluntary nature of using inclusionary housing provides a measure of success because localities can use inclusionary housing as mechanisms to meet current and projected housing needs as identified in the Housing Element (Calavita & Grimes 1998). Localities using inclusionary policies have an easier time getting housing elements approved by the state than housing elements that do not. According to Calivita and Grimes, “intentions codified in the housing element had to show some results: affordable units had to be built, and an inclusionary housing program and policies are the best mechanism to produce tangible results.” In other words, California State Housing and Community Development requires that localities perform, in terms of providing affordable housing. For example, localities simply cannot state their intentions in the housing element; they must actually provide affordable housing units. Because creating an internally inconsistent housing element that does not provide affordable housing may result in costly litigation, it is more feasible for localities to use inclusionary housing policies, as they result in actual, tangible housing units (Calavita & Grimes 1998).

But more important, and consistent with the Limerick’s theme that California history is morally complex, the
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creation of inclusionary policies and their success has to do with lawsuits and policy-makers choosing compassionately to create housing for residents who otherwise couldn’t afford a home. Today, over 107 counties and cities in California have inclusionary housing policies (Housing & California 2003). This is an amazing accomplishment given the historical exclusionary practices previously outlined. The next step, obviously, if decision-makers are to affect today’s housing crisis, is to encourage more localities to adopt inclusionary policies and encourage cities and counties who already use these policies to adopt higher, more ambitious inclusionary percentages.

Political Activism

To not only be a resident of California in the present but also to have a place in California history, it is a requisite to have engaged in political action. My sense is that there are and have been more political protests in California than any other state. At any rate, political activism is also a major part of Lim- erick’s thematic tool of moral complexity: Californians have done breathless and compassionate things in order to stand up for issues they are not only passionate about, but feel there is a right decision to be made on that particular issue. Californians, at times, have understood that the choices made by communities and decision-makers don’t have to be based on trends perceived as inevitable. That is, communities can buck trends and make the right choices about what they should do.

Perhaps the best illustration of taking political action to change trends in California history is Penny Newman’s successful campaign to clean up and force corporate and government liability for a toxic waste dump in Stringfellow called the Acid Pitts. Newman helped organize and eventually became a leader of Concerned Neighbors in Action (CNA), a neighborhood grass roots organization. CNA and Newman not only helped change the environmental movement, but also organized to get decision-makers to follow the will of the people. Newman’s organizational skills were outstanding. At a Citizens Clearing House for Hazardous Waste Meeting, she powerfully said: “This struggle is not just about environment but about basic issues of justice and fairness, of right or wrong, of the have and have-nots and those with the economic power who would seek to exploit all us”. According to Robert Gottlieb, Newman’s speech got delegates at the meeting to rise up out of their seats. With such skills at organizing and rallying community groups, she helped change political will to make the right decisions. By placing pressure on then EPA head William Reilly and on “technical experts” and getting decision-makers to listen to the people, Newman would eventually succeed in making fifteen companies and the federal government liable for clean up costs exceeding $600 million (Gottlieb 1993). In addition, she changed the meaning of what it means to be an “expert” on something. According to Newman, “we’re the experts. We’re the ones who have watched our community devastated, we’re the ones who have watched our life’s investment in our homes disappear” (Gottlieb 1993).

In terms of changing historical trends, Newman’s efforts to redefine expertise significantly transformed environmental decision-making from the realm of exclusion to one of inclusion. When only “technical experts” were sit-
ting at the decision-making table, Newman fought to broaden what expertise meant and to have those most affected by decisions included as experts. In terms of exclusionary housing practices, developers, consultants and elected officials need to take into account and act upon the needs of real experts on California’s housing crisis—the vast majority of residents and workers who cannot afford a home—and do the right thing and work for the inclusion of marginalized economic and social groups in housing markets.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Like much of the opposition Penny Newman faced getting the public organized and getting the public involved in decision making, many locally elected officials challenge the legal and economic feasibility of Congressman Farr’s proposal. The current Mayor of Marina, Ila Metee-McCutcheon firmly believes that cities should not bear the burden of providing affordable housing. Rather, she contests that local employers should do more to establish housing for its workers (McCutcheon, 2003). Other decision-makers simply believe higher percentage requirements, such as those proposed by Farr are not economically feasible nor fair for cities already overburdened with low income housing units (Smith, 2003). These arguments may shed light on how difficult it is to produce housing, but do not take steps towards solving the crisis.

Developers, as the future recipients of land conveyed from the federal government to local municipalities on Fort Ord, might argue that governmental requirements for specific percentages might violate the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. The fifth amendment says that “nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation”, meaning that the federal government is obligated to compensate landowners for permanently taking possession of land and depriving the owner of economic use. Though this is a very stretched argument, developers proposing to build housing on Fort Ord might argue that requiring high percentages of affordable housing might deprive them of productive use and expect full compensation. Therefore, decision-makers fearing litigation or compensatory payment to the developers may choose not to adopt stronger (i.e. higher percentaged) inclusionary housing policies.

But the argument for just compensation is fallacious at best, not only because land on Fort Ord is owned by the public. Land use planning avoids many “takings” lawsuits. Previous court rulings suggest that landowners might have an incredibly difficult time filing suit against a taking because they’ve been denied economic potential (Takacs 2002):

Property owners may not claim a taking simply by showing that they have been denied the ability to exploit a property interest that they heretofore had believed was available for development.

*Supreme Court Justice Brennan, Penn Central Co. v. New York City, 1978*

The best way for Seaside or FORA to avoid litigation is to include in the Base Reuse plan the policies that Farr has recommended. Any litigation seeking compensation will likely fail against a plan that explicitly describes what types of developments will be permitted.
According to David Takacs and LandWatch Monterey County, landowners who believe they will likely lose a takings lawsuit will usually not pursue one (Takacs 2002).

An additional roadblock to the adoption of Farr’s policies is a recent study by an economic consulting firm, which found it unfeasible for developers to achieve 50 percent affordability (Economics 2003). Farr, though, rejects that claim and is still pushing for the adoption of his recommendations (Farr 2003). I believe this is an excellent strategy for the Congressman to take and hope he doesn’t rescind this assertion at the January 9th, FORA Board meeting, where elected officials will choose whether or not to adopt his recommendations. I, on the other hand, simply support the maximum percentage of affordable housing possible for the new developments on Fort Ord. For example, the consultants’ report suggested that 30 and up to 40 percent affordability was achievable for developers (Economics 2003). This would provide substantially more affordable housing than the minimum of 20 percent. In my view, adopting these higher percentages would still count as a victory for residents and workers who otherwise can’t afford housing in Monterey County.

Yet another obstacle facing the creation affordable housing is the perceived conflict between using growth controls to protect the environment and providing affordable housing. As outlined earlier, growth controls have the unintended consequence of raising housing prices, which, for some results in a conflict of values. Policy limitations on growth, however, do not necessarily drive up the costs of housing; cities can take measures to counter such an effect. A study of growth control measures in Boulder, Colorado found that inclusionary housing policies mitigate the potential negative consequences of growth control measures (Calavita & Grimes 1998). In other words, community members can have the best of both worlds: they can protect agriculture and open space, and provide much-needed affordable housing at the same time.

I believe localities such as FORA, and cities and counties must face difficult challenges and find ways to achieve certain goals. I believe that the FORA board should at least require FORA staff to find ways to realize Farr’s policy goals, rather than finding excuses to not adopt them. For example, on August 8th, the FORA Board voted unanimously to create a community housing trust fund to help provide affordable housing. This trust fund could help developers create more affordable housing or help cities retain money that they might lose in property taxes by requiring a specific amount of below market rate homes. Or, along with the trust fund, FORA could adopt a policy requiring that developers build homes at higher densities to reduce land costs per housing unit and make it economically easier to provide affordable housing (Patton & Staff 2002). Whatever the decision, community leaders and elected officials should not stop at trying to achieve a policy goal. Instead, they should make serious efforts to find ways to adopt new policies, such as those recommended by Congressman Farr, that make Monterey County communities more vibrant and affordable places to live.

Throughout my HIPP I’ve worked with LandWatch Monterey County to help create or shift the political will of FORA board members to adopt Farr’s policies. I am truly inspired by the involvement of LandWatch in
politics and the overall Monterey County community. Their mission is radical in many ways. First it requires that citizens participate in the local decision-making process—that citizens demand that land use policies protect the environment and promote greater social equity. In other words, LandWatch hopes to inspire citizens to establish a better quality of life and sense of community for county residents through empowering residents to take action through involvement in land use policy making. In addition, as one of its core principles, LandWatch wants locally elected officials to be more accountable to the public regarding land use decisions. Elected officials, by definition, should reflect in their actions the will of the public. So when the public shows up to tell their representatives how to vote, those representatives have an obligation to vote according to the public’s wishes.

FORA has yet to adopt Congressman Farr’s recommendations but this HIPP is still a success. Part of the reason, and I think Gary Patton and other LandWatch staff would agree, is that the FORA board has had difficulty making a decision in front of a well-informed and passionate public. I’ve worked with LandWatch to organize community members to show up and speak out at important FORA Board meetings, which has, at least to this point, deterred the FORA Board from making the wrong decision, even though the they have yet to build the political will to adopt Farr’s recommendation.

Ultimately, land use policy is about community choice; it is about community agencies adopting policies that benefit the broader scope of society. I believe the choices communities make should enhance quality of life and achieve greater social equity. Congressman Farr’s policies take a decisive step at creating a level playing field for Monterey County residents and ensure that Monterey County workers and residents have an equal opportunity.

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