

Marin County Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903



Protecting Marin Since 1934

May 9, 2012

Dear President Kinsey and Supervisors:

Marin Conservation League recently joined with other leading environmental organizations in urging the Board to put on its agenda discussion of a ballot measure to support Marin's parks and family farms. This letter expands and amplifies on the earlier letter and provides suggestions on how the Board might proceed.

Marin Conservation League believes that adequate funding of Marin parks and the open space preserves is critical. We also recognize the need to preserve Marin's agricultural lands in a time of economic uncertainty for the next generation of family farmers. Together, these open space lands give Marin County its essential shape and character.

The prospect of a ballot measure to provide funding to allow for acquisition of sensitive lands, manage existing facilities and preserve Marin's family farms through a continued easement program is encouraging. A successful measure could keep existing properties well managed and take advantage of opportunities to acquire wetlands or other sensitive properties, or negotiate conservation easements, as they arise. The three priorities of need identified by Marin County Parks: Environmental Maintenance, Healthy Parks & Healthy People; and the Preservation Initiative are appropriate.

No one questions the need for additional financial resources to sustain the County's open space preserves, parks, and agricultural lands. There are, however, necessary steps to assure a successful ballot measure. A current voter survey should be done to test voter support at this time. We recommend including a question or two to test the public's interest in providing some support to the two State Parks that are trying to stay open in Marin. Other questions should test some of the issues identified under the three priorities stated by Marin Parks. Most critical is to ascertain whether a quarter-cent or an eighth-cent has the strongest and necessary level of support.

Finally, an Expenditure Plan must be developed to assure voters where the money will be directed. The Expenditure Plan is especially important for organizations to "get on board the campaign wagon," since the time is very short and the campaigning will need to be launched soon to raise the funds and prepare necessary campaign materials. There will always be questions about the timing and whether this November is the best opportunity available for a tax measure. If the survey shows adequate support and the Expenditure Plan is realistic and addresses the identified priorities, the measure should go forward and be put on the ballot.

We urge you to authorize the survey, and if the results are favorable, to follow that with

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the preparation of an Expenditure Plan. Thank you! We are grateful for the Board's continued support of preserving open space, parks, and agricultural lands over the decades.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Stompe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Susan Stompe  
President