

To: Santa Barbara LAFCO natasha@sblafco.org; lafco@sblafco.org;
Joan Hartmann, Santa Barbara County Supervisor, Third District

Re: Bailey Avenue Prime Farmland and City of Lompoc Sphere of Influence

Dear LAFCO Commissioners & Supervisor Hartmann,

I have lived in Santa Barbara County since 1973 and have been involved in agriculture along Highway One between Gaviota and Lompoc for most of that time. I have watched the growth and changes in the City of Lompoc for almost fifty years ... and all of that has not been good.

When I first married and moved to the area, we could safely drive our cattle across rural Highway One without a police escort. I remember, with the help of our neighbors, driving bulls across with one pickup parked on each side during a quiet time of day for traffic. Today, this would be suicidal.

I live close to the Scenic Highway One and I am awakened by traffic at 5 a.m. each morning, and often by the roar of semi-trucks which travel the road at night. Traffic starts up again here at 4 p.m. as the thousands of commuters return to their bedroom community of Lompoc. I have had four vehicles fly off Highway One and roll over in my cattle pasture during the past few years, and there have been a number of recent fatalities on this road. Highway One is not a safe commuter road, and neither is Highway 246.

The loss of prime farmland has been a serious issue for years. Flat areas along river valleys have often been chosen for development at the expense of agriculture. These areas tend to have prime alluvial soils that are desirable for agriculture.

Lompoc was founded as an agricultural community, and the city would do well to respect and honor its roots. Agriculture provides many jobs in the Lompoc Valley for workers who don't need to commute very far. They spend their money in the city, send their kids to schools within the Lompoc Unified School District, and visit local restaurants and doctors. Grocery stores, schools, restaurants, and medical offices provide many more jobs within the city. If houses replace the productive agricultural fields, it goes without saying that many of their occupants will join the daily rat race southward. Santa Barbara needs to provide affordable housing for its workers and it should not rely on Lompoc to do this.

Sacrificing of prime farmland to grow even more houses should not be an option. If this cat gets out of the bag, pretty soon there will be houses all the way to Surf. If more houses must be built, there are plenty of vacant lots for infilling, and more could be built on the less prime sandy soils near the Y. The City of Lompoc already occupies much prime farmland, but it should not be permitted to gobble up any more.

Agriculture contributes \$992 billion to the American economy each year. California is the top agricultural state in the U.S., and Santa Barbara County ranks as the 12th county in California for

agricultural production. It is estimated that one Santa Barbara County farmer grows enough food for 155 people.

The Agricultural Commissioner's Crop Report noted that Santa Barbara County agricultural production totaled \$1,918,186.00 in 2021.

Between 1992 and 2012, 31 million acres of farmland were lost to development. That is the equivalent of 175 acres per hour or 3 acres per minute. 62% of development during the same time period took place on agricultural land. Just 17% of American land is ideal for farming, and we simply don't have any more to lose.

LAFCO has policies that encourage conservation of prime agricultural lands. It is my hope that LAFCO will do the right thing and adhere to these policies now and in the future by permanently restricting any expansion of Lompoc's sphere of influence to non-prime land.

Respectfully,

Sally Isaacson