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Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2887
October 4, 2005

Re: Timberland Conversion Ordinance

Dear Supervisors,

The tragedies of the Katrina and Rita hurricanes have reminded us of the disasters which a failure of foresight can bring, while deforestation worldwide is the second leading contributor to the threat of human-induced global warming. Please bear these important lessons in mind as you contemplate action on a timberland ordinance, and please align your timberland ordinance with actions which you have recently already taken - **the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors voted 3-1, Sept. 22, on the boldest GHG emissions reduction target of any U.S. community.** Source: <http://www.skymetrics.us/news/news22.php>

Consider the following:

"Human activities are influencing the chemistry of the Earth's atmosphere in ways that are not fully understood but which could ultimately affect forest ecosystems in significant ways. The buildup of greenhouse gases is accelerated by fossil fuel burning, deforestation, livestock production, agricultural activities, and the widespread use and release of chemical compounds such as CFCs". -Report of the United States on the Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests, USDA Forest Service, 1997

"California's forests are an important contributor to global carbon cycles and act to help regulate climatic changes. Scientists generally have agreed that the earth's climate is changing. Most believe that this is at least partly due to human activities that have altered the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the buildup of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. These

gases trap heat. Although uncertainty exists about exactly how earth's climate responds to these gases, global temperatures are rising... Forests play an important role in the earth's carbon cycle. On one hand, the loss of forests on a global scale to other uses (deforestation) is responsible for up to one-third of carbon emissions to the atmosphere, and ranks second only to the burning of fossil fuels as a source of CO2 emissions. On the other hand, forests serve as a huge carbon sink: they capture CO2 from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and store it as carbon in wood and other carbon-based compounds in soil, in understory plants, and in the litter on the forest floor. Large amounts of additional carbon could be stored in U.S. forests, including those in California."

Source (emph. added): [Forest Resource Assessment Project – CDF, http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/assessment2003/Chapter5_Forests_and_Climate/overview.html](http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/assessment2003/Chapter5_Forests_and_Climate/overview.html)

Consider the [Role of Forestry in Carbon Sequestration in the County](#), "Sonoma County, similar to the global arena, is also losing its forestland. Between 1990 and 1997, the County lost 9,505 acres of its hardwood rangelands (oak woodlands) to vineyard conversions. Sonoma County has lost at least 20% of its original conifer forests to other uses, with the most significant conversion occurring between 1850 and 1940. The majority of the County's old growth forests have been logged, which means the significant carbon stores that those forests once held have also been lost. While current statistics indicate fewer acreage of timberland loss in more recent times, **the pending conversion of 1,900 acres of timberland to vineyards by Premier Pacific Vineyards indicates that conversion of the County's softwood forests still occurs and is still a threat." (Source: <http://climateprotectioncampaign.jot.com/ForesTry>)**

Therefore, we especially need to preserve and protect Site Class III timberland with an ordinance. There is almost no Class I or II in private TPZ, for instance, the bulk of it is III, and it is probable that RRD is similarly distributed.

Table 7. Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) acreage by Site Class in California as of 2000-2001

| County | Total Acreage | Site Class | | | | |
|--------|---------------|------------|-------|---------------|--------|-------|
| | | I | II | III | IV | V |
| Sonoma | 82,819 | - | 3,551 | 51,664 | 21,712 | 5,892 |

Source: [Timberland Site Class on Private Lands Zoned for Timber Production](http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/publications/Timberland_Site_Class_on_Private_Lands_Zoned_for_Timber_Production.pdf), Forest Resource Assessment Project – CDF, http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/publications/Timberland_Site_Class_on_Private_Lands_Zoned_for_Timber_Production.pdf

Thank you for having the courage to consider another difficult and contentious issue.

Jay Halcomb, Chair
 Russian River Residents Against Unsafe Logging (RRRAUL)
<http://www.rrraul.org>