

James Russell Baskin AICP • Julia Lynn Green RN

September 10, 2012

Eric Huff RPF, Regulations Coordinator
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA, 94244-2460

Subject: Board of Forestry – Forest Practice Committee September 11, 2012 Meeting, Item 3
In re: Issues Relating to TPZ Zoning of, and Conservation Easement Conveyance of Development Rights for, Assessor Parcel Number 126-180-27, SE¼ Sec. 24, T15N, R2E, HB&M, James Baskin and Julia Green, Owners-of Record, County of Del Norte

Dear Mr. Huff:

Per your request, this letter provides an update to the above-encaptioned matter regarding the County of Del Norte's Assessor's past stated intent to rezone the subject timberlands property subject to the "immediate rezoning" provisions of California Government Code sections 51130 and/or 51155. It's my understanding that this matter came to the Board of Forestry's attention from forwarded correspondence, dated March 14, 2012, I had previously submitted to Mike Howe, Unit Chief, with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

As previously disclosed, a reading of the subject property's conservation easement by one of the Assessor's Office staff was interpreted as having effectively extinguished any potential for the commercial harvesting of timber from the property. Given the large percentage of public and sovereign lands within its boundaries, the resulting limited property tax base, and an economy still primarily dependent upon resource extraction, any further deprivation of deferred timber yield tax revenue that the easement might bring about was viewed as cause to review the appropriateness of continuing the property's TPZ zoning status, if all eventual timber harvesting were being precluded.

Since having written Chief Howe, I have met with the County Assessor and representatives of the County's Community Development and County Council's Office to further discuss the concerns the Assessor's Office initially identified with respect to the easement's language. Prior to the last meeting on May 1, 2012, draft suggested amended language prepared collaboratively by the easement grantors, grantee, and their attorneys, was forwarded to County staff. From the perusal of the suggested language modifications, several additional revisions were identified and discussed at the May 1, 2012 meeting. With other, more pressing matters demanding the full attention of the County Assessor and Council, all parties agreed to postpone further discussion for a couple of months until these immediate work demands were met.

We are now in the process of reinitiating discussions between the parties, with additional suggested easement language being crafted by the grantors and grantee for subsequent submittal

by County counterparts. It is our hope that resolution of the County's concerns regarding the language of the conservation easement may be accomplished through the recordation of an amended easement before the onset of the fall-winter holiday season.

In the interim, the property owners and the easement grantee continue to work cooperatively on several timber stand improvement projects with grant funding provided through the Natural Resources Conservation Service – Farm Service Office's Environmental Quality Incentive's Program (EQIP). In 2011, twelve acres of non-commercial, heavy thinning and slash treatment, conducted in coordination with the Six Rivers National Forest's *Big Flat Vegetation and Fuels Management Project*, was completed on the most over-grown and wildfire susceptible portions of the property. Additional funding for forest stand improvements over a 15-acre area comprising the property's more riparian-proximate timberlands and forested openings has been secured for the 2012-2015 funding cycle. Work tasks for this round of stand improvements will entail additional manipulations to stand species composition, structure, and stocking through non-commercial cutting and removal of selected trees and understory vegetation, associated woody plant residue treatments, and planting 200-300 hardwood seedlings (Oregon white oak, big leaf maple, and Port Orford cedar) over a two-acre area of meadow openings. In addition, the most recent funding has resulted in the development of a forest management plan for the whole of the property, developed to NRCS criteria, addressing short- and long-term woodlot management options, including commercial selective harvesting of saw timber, firewood, and other forest products, towards the eventual goal of reestablishing uneven-aged, late-seral conditions on the property.

Please feel free to contact me by phone or email if you have any questions regarding the status of this matter.

Sincerely Yours,

James R Baskin _____

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Property Owner/Easement Grantor

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