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RCT Lands LP

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**Public Resource Code 10251**

**FINDINGS**

**Applicants for an agricultural conservation easement OR fee acquisition grant shall meet all of the following eligibility criteria:**

**(a) The parcel proposed for conservation is expected to continue to be used for, and is large enough to sustain, commercial agricultural production. The land is also in an area that possesses services, and the surrounding parcel sizes and land use will support long-term commercial agricultural production.**

The Vanoli Ranch Ag Easement (51.6 ac), Somavia Ranch (66 ac) and Redding Ranch (318 ac) are all over 40 acres which is the zoning requirement for commercial agriculture. (Ex, LU-17) All properties are located in farmland areas and are neighbored by currently producing agricultural ranches. The Somavia and Redding properties, although close to commercial and residential areas, are located in open farmland. These properties have all been identified as possessing capable agricultural land growing requirements based on yields, soils, and location and are appropriate for Ag Land Easement conservation designation. (Ex 10, pp 2)

All the properties are located in the central portion of the Salinas Valley in south Monterey County area. Since agriculture is the main industry in Monterey County these properties are ideally suited for continued agricultural use in the "salad bowl of the world." (Ex 22, LU-2)

**(b) The applicable city or county has a general plan that demonstrates long-term commitment to agricultural land objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the plan, as they relate to the area of the county of city where the easement acquisition is proposed.**

Through the general plan the City of Greenfield will promote compact city growth and phased extension of urban areas to inhibit sprawl and encourage development that improves agriculture and preserves farmland and open space to maintain the rural character of the city.

(Ex 22 LU-11)

In addition the General Plan for Monterey County establishes a “Right to Farm” ordinance which helps protect agricultural production by making neighboring property owners aware of the potential conditions that are associated with farmlands. (Ex 22, AG 4)

Also established in the general plan are mitigation procedures that will be followed when agricultural land is annexed into city and its designation is changed. (Ex 22 AG 5)

In addition Monterey County has created the Monterey County Agriculture and Historical Land Conservancy Inc. This organization was established in 1984 by Monterey County residents and is currently known as “Ag Land Trust.” This group holds recorded Ag Land Easements in trust and as of 2010 is protecting 22,000 acres in Monterey County. (Ex 22 AG 1)

**(c) Without conservation, the land proposed for protection is likely to be converted to nonagricultural use in the foreseeable future.**

The 51.6 acres of the Vanoli Ranch that will be remaining in Monterey County under agricultural zoning is the most likely to be threatened in the foreseeable future with a zoning change. It is located immediately adjacent to the 121.4 acres of the Vanoli Ranch that will be annexed into the City of Greenfield and be rezoned Highway Commercial and Heavy Industrial.

Bordering the city limits of Greenfield and the current Sphere of Influence and being located on the east side of Highway 101 makes the probability of annexation in the future and removal from agricultural land very likely for future commercial growth in the City of Greenfield. (Ex 15 pp 22)

The 318 acres of the Redding Ranch, located less than 2 miles south and east of the City of Greenfield are also a good possibility for possible development in the future because this property is located immediately adjacent to Highway 101 N with easy on off access and very close to an originally proposed Sphere of Influence. In addition the General Plan of Monterey County regarding agricultural land conservation is greatly limiting any development or loss of Ag Land on the west side of Highway 101. Therefore since the Redding Ranch is located on the east side of the freeway in such an accessible location it could be a target for growth in the future. (Ex 16 pp 21-22)

The 66 acres of the Somavia Ranch, located approximately 2 miles northwest of Chualar, California were once proposed to be zoned for Heavy Industrial development because this property is located immediately adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks which are directly off Highway 101 S. The proximity of both those transportation avenues offered the opportunity to develop this property into a facility that could offer storage and pick up of agricultural product both by truck and railcar. That this zoning did not occur was because Monterey County wanted the preservation of quality farmland to continue. (Ex 17 pp 23)