

Good morning,

I am Cate Moore. My husband and I have lived in Santa Cruz County for 34 years and we own working land in the Santa Cruz Mountains. I would like to thank the Board for agreeing to hear our comments regarding the Open Space Project.

In 2000 the Board of Supervisors declared that the only zoning designation where timber harvesting could occur was TP (Timber Production). The issue was contentious, there was a lawsuit and the County spent somewhere in the neighborhood of 3.5 million dollars in legal fees and staff time. In the end, the courts said the county could restrict harvesting to TP zones. TP is the zoning designation the County has intentionally set aside as the preferred location for timber harvesting. Hundreds of county residents went to the effort and expense of rezoning their parcels so they could responsibly (and legally) manage their forests.

If an open space district uses tax dollars to purchase TP lands and then locks up the timber resource, either through land purchase, conservation easements or the purchase of timber rights, this action would be directly contrary to the actions the Board of Supervisors took in 2000.

Any potential challenges to our continued productive use of our land erodes the tax base and makes us dependent on products from distant lands that don't require our level of environmental protections.

We ask that under no circumstances should this proposed Open Space District have the authority to purchase rights on any agricultural land, including TP lands. We don't want to see our taxes used to drive our agricultural base out of business.

Thank you