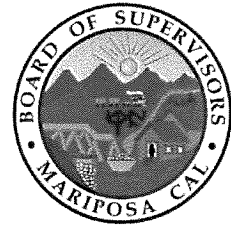




MARIPOSA COUNTY

Planning · 209-966-5151



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2019-442

MEETING: July 23, 2019
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Sarah Williams, Planning Director
RE: Adopt a Resolution of Support for the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Resolution of support for the approval of the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement Proposal to the California Department of Conservation's Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program on behalf of the Sierra Foothill Conservancy. Site encumbers 42 Parcels, which are west of the Hornitos Town Planning Area and east of the Lake McClure and McSwain Recreation Areas, for a Total 7,100 Acres; Sierra Foothills Conservancy, Proponent and Hornitos Land Company, LLC, Owners.

The subject parcels are in the Agriculture Exclusive Zone (AEZ) and Agriculture Working Landscape (AWL) Land Use, and are under non-renewal with an Land Conservation Act (LCA) contract.

The purpose of the easement is to:

1. Avoid loss of agricultural lands in the Agriculture/ Working Landscape land use classification to maintain rural character;
2. Preserve agricultural economic viability; and
3. Conserve and enhance the ecosystems, plant communities, wildlife habitats, and inherent diversity of plant and animal species.

Please see the attached information for more details.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board of Supervisors has taken no previous action on this request.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Negative action would result in no resolution of support for the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement. The proposal wouldn't comply with the grant agreement requirements, and the easement would likely not be acquired.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

Resolution - Action Requested 2019-442

ATTACHMENTS:

Hornitos Ranch PowerPoint Presentation (PDF)

BOS Resolution Request Letter Hornitos Ranch (PDF)

Supporting Information Package Hornitos Ranch (PDF)

Draft Resolution BOS Hornitos Ranch (DOCX)

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

SECONDER: Kevin Cann, District IV Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MARIPOSA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Resolution

No. 2019-442 **A resolution of support for the approval of the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement Proposal to the California Strategic Growth Council's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program, administered by the California Department of Conservation, on behalf of the Sierra Foothill Conservancy.**

WHEREAS, the Planning Director received a request from the Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC) for a Board of Supervisors resolution of support for the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement located in Mariposa County; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Foothill Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Land Trust established in 1996. SFC's mission is to protect and honor the natural resources and cultural heritages of the grasslands, foothills, and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks, while providing land for farms and ranches, a home for native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program is a component of the Strategic Growth Council's Affordable Housing and Sustainability Program and is administered by the Department of Conservation in conjunction with the Natural Resources Agency, and through a grant program is providing assistance to conserve important agricultural land resources that are subject to conversion pressures; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement is to protect priority agricultural land resources and connect privately conserved working rangeland in eastern Mariposa County, by permanently conserving the open space character, grazing, agricultural, scenic, habitat, natural, ecosystem, and historic values of the Hornitos Ranch by extinguishing the right to subdivide, the right to sell parcels individually while limiting the number of development rights; and

WHEREAS, SFC has been awarded funding by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Wildlife Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation under the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program in support of the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement; and

WHEREAS, at their meeting on the 23rd day of July, 2019, the Board of Supervisors considered the request and all supporting information provided.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mariposa approves the easement proposal and certifies that the easement proposal meets 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 the necessary market, infrastructure, and agricultural support services, and the surrounding parcel sizes and land uses will support long-term commercial agricultural production.

b) Mariposa County has a general plan which demonstrates a long-term commitment to agricultural land conservation. This commitment is reflected in the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the plan, as they relate to the area of Mariposa County where the easement acquisition is proposed.

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

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement assists the County in the maintenance of the County’s rural character through the preservation of agricultural lands, which is a cornerstone of the Mariposa County General Plan.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mariposa does hereby support the approval of the Hornitos Ranch Conservation Easement proposal funded in part by the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program on behalf of the Sierra Foothill Conservancy.

ON MOTION BY Supervisor Long, seconded by Supervisor Cann, this resolution is duly passed and adopted this 23rd day of July, 2019 by the following vote:

AYES: SMALLCOMBE, JONES, LONG, CANN, MENETREY

NOES: NONE

EXCUSED: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE



Kevin Cann, Vice-Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

Attest:



René LaRoche
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Approved as to Form:



Steven W. Dahlem
County Counsel