

CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

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December 16, 2019

Shawna Scott
City of San Luis Obispo
990 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93401

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the Proposed Froom Ranch Specific Plan

Dear Ms. Scott:

The California Oaks program of California Wildlife Foundation (CWF/CO) works to conserve oak ecosystems because of their critical role in sequestering carbon, maintaining healthy watersheds, providing wildlife habitat, and sustaining cultural values. We are aware of the above captioned Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Froom Ranch Specific Plan in the City of San Luis Obispo, and its potential impact on oak woodlands.

Oak woodlands are being affected statewide by the spread of residential development into those woodlands, and the attendant disruption of wildlife habitat, manipulation for fuel management, and introduction of non-native species, sometimes even including non-native oak species. Although the oak woodlands at Froom Ranch occupy only a small portion of the property in one area, that area has been proposed for a cluster of residential development in a small valley surrounded by those woodlands, and fed by three small streams.

We note that the DEIR recognizes this situation and has called for the elimination or relocation of that cluster. This is because of the impact of such development on wildlife habitat and movement (the DEIR identifies the site as an important wildlife corridor), as well as the need to manipulate the surrounding woodlands for fire hazard reduction. The DEIR recommends a mitigation measure (MM BIO-13) that the streams be provided with a buffer of at least three hundred feet, in order to avoid the anticipated impacts upon wildlife movements, streams, and surrounding oak woodlands.

CWF/CO supports this mitigation.

We have observed repeatedly that residential development within and close to oak woodlands inevitably leads to manipulations of those woodlands for a variety of purposes which are generally detrimental to the health, ecological functioning, and natural character of those areas. For these reasons we urge the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo to uphold this mitigation measure and require the elimination or relocation of this portion of the project which can have an outsized impact on its natural surroundings. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Janet Cobb, Executive Officer

cc: Neil Havlik, California Native Plant Society, San Luis Obispo Chapter (CNPS-SLO)