

122-Zuckerman_082309

From: Ben Zuckerman <ben@astro.UCLA.EDU>
To: NEWHALLRANCH@dfg.ca.gov
Date: Sun, Aug 23, 2009 9:48 AM
Subject: newhall ranch

To Whom it may concern: As a Los Angeles resident I'm writing to oppose the development of Newhall Ranch. Our region is already overwhelmed by traffic, sprawl, water shortages and other major environmental issues and a Newhall Ranch development will just exacerbate them all. Also, humans are gobbling up all the land and natural resources in California at an astounding rate. It is far past the time when we need to leave some areas untouched as habitat for condors and other wildlife.

1

Sincerely, Ben Zuckerman

122. Email from Ben Zuckerman, dated August 23, 2009

Response 1

The Corps and CDFG appreciate the comments provided in your email regarding the environmental effects of the proposed Project. The comment addresses general environmental issue areas, including traffic, water supply, and habitat for sensitive species. These and other environmental issue areas received extensive analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR, including **Section 4.3**, Water Resources; **Section 4.5**, Biological Resources; **Section 4.8**, Traffic, **Section 6.0**, Cumulative Impacts, and **Subsection 7.2**, Growth Inducing Impacts. In addition, for further responsive information, please see revised **Sections 4.3, 4.5, 4.8, and 6.0** of the Final EIS/EIR. The comment does not raise any specific issues regarding the analysis provided by the EIS/EIR, therefore, no additional response is provided. However, the comment will be included as part of the record and made available to the decision makers prior to a final decision on the proposed project.

This comment also indicates that the proposed Project would result in "urban sprawl." It is recognized that the RMDP and SCP components of the Project evaluated by the Draft EIS/EIR would facilitate urban growth on the Project site. The environmental impacts of extending urban development onto the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan site were previously evaluated by the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Program EIR and Final Additional Analysis for the Specific Plan and WRP, which was certified by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2003. The environmental effects of implementing the Specific Plan have also been evaluated by the Newhall Ranch RMDP and SCP Draft EIS/EIR. Through these environmental review efforts, the environmental effects of the proposed Project and the resulting extension of urban land uses onto the Project site have been analyzed and disclosed in a comprehensive manner.

There are many definitions of what constitutes "urban sprawl." A representative example comes from a 1998 Sierra Club Sprawl Report (<http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/report98/>), which defined urban sprawl as:

"Sprawl is low-density development beyond the edge of service and employment, which separates where people live from where they shop, work, recreate, and education – thus requiring cars to move between zones."

As indicated by this definition, urban sprawl results in the development of low-density residential land uses, which in the Project region has often consisted of single-family, suburban-type development patterns. As indicated on Draft EIS/EIR **Table 3.0-10**, Development Facilitated by RMDP Component of the Proposed Project (Alternative 2), implementation of the proposed Project would facilitate the development of 9,081 single-family dwellings and 11,804 multi-family dwelling units on the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan project site. On the Entrada portion of the Project site, 428 single-family units and 1,297 multi-family dwelling units would be provided. As proposed, more than one-half (58 percent) of the residential units facilitated by the implementation of the proposed Project would be multi-family units. Since a majority of the residential units that would be provided on the Project site would be multi-family units, the development facilitated by the Project would not reflect the low-density development patterns that have been typically associated with urban sprawl in the past.

One of the objectives of the RMDP and SCP is to facilitate the development of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, and an objective of the Specific Plan is to meet the regional demand for housing and jobs.

The demand for jobs created by the development of the Specific Plan would be partially met with the build-out of the Valencia Commerce Center portion of the proposed RMDP/SCP Project, and by new commercial development that would be provided on the Specific Plan and Entrada project sites. In addition to providing employment opportunities on the Project site, essential public services such as schools, shopping and recreation facilities would also be provided. By including employment centers and public service land uses in the design of the proposed Project, automobile trips and total vehicle miles traveled resulting from work-related commute trips and trips to access public services would be minimized.

The proposed Project site is located adjacent to Interstate 5 and State Route 126. Locating new urban development adjacent to these major transportation facilities eliminates the need for major roadway facility extensions, which has been a characteristic of urban sprawl in the past.

In conclusion, the proposed RMDP and SCP Project would facilitate the development of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, which was previously approved by Los Angeles County. Implementation of the proposed Project would result in an extension of urban land uses; however, the proposed new development would incorporate design elements that minimize the adverse environmental effects that have been commonly associated with urban sprawl in the past.