



Deborah Schwarz
Planner II
City of Gilroy
7351 Rosanna Street
Gilroy, CA 95020

January 29, 2008

Dear Ms. Schwarz,

Thank you for extending the deadline for accepting applications for the East Gilroy Specific Plan Task Force. We appreciate the City's gesture in seeking environmental representation. However, Greenbelt Alliance will not be recommending anyone to sit on the Task Force because the Task Force will be planning for the development of the 660 acres of farmland east of Highway 101, and Greenbelt Alliance believes this land should not be developed.

Instead, Gilroy should focus on city-centered growth and infill development. The City has already pumped several million dollars into revitalizing its downtown. Adding homes and jobs to downtown is a better investment of the City's resources. We understand that the City relies on sales tax dollars to support vital community services. However, there are plenty of opportunities for development closer to the heart of your community.

Paving over floodplains and farmland at the '660' is neither economically nor environmentally sustainable. The area has no infrastructure, and most notably, no public transportation. Today, many communities are meeting the climate change challenge and lowering greenhouse gas emissions by reducing their residents' and workers' need to drive. Unfortunately, Gilroy seems headed in the opposite direction.

Greenbelt Alliance encourages the City to abandon plans for the development of the '660' and to instead focus on the downtown core. Farmland is a precious and vanishing resource, and Gilroy will not be better off once this land has been developed. With a creative approach to planning, you could still increase the number of shops, jobs, and homes within Gilroy while also protecting the greenbelt of hills, farms, and open space that defines your community. The '660' is an important part of that greenbelt.

For these reasons, Greenbelt Alliance will not be joining the discussion on how best to develop the '660,' and we encourage you to halt plans for its development.

Sincerely,

Michele Beasley
South Bay Field Representative