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February 26, 2014

Sonoma LAFCO  
Attn: Richard Bottarini  
Executive Officer Sonoma LAFCO  
575 Administration Drive, Room 104A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Mr. Bottarini:

**RE: Cloverdale Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence**

Greenbelt Alliance and Sonoma County Conservation Action have been working in Sonoma County for over 20 years to limit sprawl, protect open space, and preserve the community’s rural character. Over the last 5 years, our organizations have worked closely with local Cloverdale residents and the City of Cloverdale to achieve a shared vision of an urban growth boundary. As you know, an effective urban growth boundary is one that directs urban growth to create compact development and preserve open space. Greenbelt Alliance supported the City of Cloverdale’s Urban Growth Boundary, put before voters in 2010, even though our organizations had reservations about the three “exception areas” included in the policy that lie south of the existing city boundary (Rains Creek, Industrial Area, Asti). Sonoma County Conservation Action did not endorse the ballot measure because of the inclusion of these Southern “exception areas.”

We are concerned that the City of Cloverdale is seeking to add the Rains Creek, Westside, Industrial, and Asti areas to its sphere of influence. The Rains Creek and Westside are located outside of the City’s designated urban growth boundary. We recognize that the Local Agency Formation Commission is attempting to preserve open space with the provision of a permanent dedication of open space in the western hills. However, legitimate land-use protections to prevent further development from occurring in this area are needed. Real conservation easements with enforceable covenants, held by a public trust organization, such as Sonoma Land Trust or

Sonoma County Agriculture and Open Space District are required to ensure that this expansive land area is not further developed beyond agriculture.

Furthermore, Cloverdale’s expansive sphere of influence request not only threatens our County’s limited natural and agricultural areas; it puts additional pressure on the existing and strained water supply. Water shortages in Cloverdale are common and the Local Agency Formation Commission should be more concerned about current and future water supply issues.

We hope that the Commission follows its general policy to exclude parcels outside the urban growth boundary from the city, and to deny the allowance of an urban island, which the Asti exception area would create.

Sincerely,

Lana Russell-Hurd  
Regional Representative  
Greenbelt Alliance  
707-575-3661

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Executive Director  
Sonoma County Conservation Action  
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