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To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: COMMENTS Comprehensive Tree Protection Policy 11/4/21
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EXTERNAL

Comprehensive Tree Protection Policy

Although the Tree Protection presentation is informational, I write to urge the Planning Commission to support a temporary time out on county approved tree removal permits now.

The process of reviewing the current development policies, collecting the data requested by the Supervisors, and drafting science based comprehensive options to bring it forward takes time. Meanwhile tree removal permits are being issued. Since the County has surprisingly not kept track of the many tree removal permits each department approves, it has been left to the public to do so. We now know hundreds and hundreds of acres of trees have been converted to other uses. And as a community, we all now know that we need these woodlands and trees more than ever - and pretty much more than we need most other things, as we race to get our climate stabilized.

Everything we do must support climate stabilization. You are informed enough to know we must act now. We must reduce emissions and sequester our CO2 in large quantities.

As you can see from the comments you have received, most are from people who get this concept and hope and expect our representatives are paying attention and doing ALL they can to bring policy changes that contribute to real climate stabilization.

Petaluma the Little Town that Roared

This is not time for business as usual. Take Petaluma for example. It passed a prohibition on new gas stations. In the whole country, Petaluma is the leader on this and individuals are receiving national and international attention for doing something good. People welcomed this act.

Sonoma County can also get itself on the map without an expensive branding campaign by simply doing a common sense thing to protect its mature trees - because they are more valuable to the community standing than they are converted to any other use. Imagine the headlines in the NYTimes and the Guardian of London ...Sonoma County Planners Support Smartest Tree Protection Policy Climate Scientists Have Seen. Local leaders will stand out from the crowd and be interviewed and people around the country will know Sonoma County for acting appropriately and consistent with science.

Climate Science Is the Guiding Science

Climate scientists tell us we have less than 10 years to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change by reducing emissions and sequestering the green house gases that we continue to emit.

Saving trees and woodlands costs the County nothing. It is a free and effective climate change fighting "technology" that the county has thus far seen willing to squander.

Sonoma County residents know and want to see their political leaders be clear-eyed about our land use policies. This generation and the next want you to embrace the science and stand for their future.

Ministerial Means No Potential for Significant Environmental Impacts

Right now clearing acres of trees and woodlands is largely considered a “ministerial” act...like getting a dog license. This is one of the biggest loop holes that exist in our public policy. Lumping very destructive activities into a category of development that allows for no public notice, no climate analysis, no environmental analysis, and no mitigation is a mistake that we need to correct.

We have an opportunity to change this when it comes to tree removals, and staff needs time to work on what is now a very permissive, preferential, not transparent, and an out of date approach to tree removal.

Please support a temporary time out on county approved tree removals until we make our code consistent, fair, and climate smart.

Thank you.

Kimberly Burr
Protect Our Working Woodlands
Green Valley Creek

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