



February 6, 2017

Carole D'Elia  
Executive Director  
Little Hoover Commission  
925 L Street, Suite 805  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: February 23, 2017 Public Hearing on State Permitting

Dear Ms. D'Elia:

We appreciate the Little Hoover Commission's efforts to organize this hearing on state permitting requirements facing government agencies and special districts across California. We write to convey our support for best governance practices and streamlining of processes associated with permitting of natural resource restoration and enhancement projects.

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority or OSA) was created by the State Legislature in 1993 at the urging of community leaders who saw the importance of maintaining the ecological integrity of the region. The purpose of the Authority is to preserve key portions of the natural environment in order to balance continuing urban growth. The OSA is an independent special district governed by an elected board of directors that oversees a \$12 million annual budget. The cities of Milpitas, Santa Clara, Campbell, San Jose, and Morgan Hill, as well as unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County lie within the Authority's jurisdiction. OSA's major preservation tools include buying land, acquiring conservation easements, restoring habitat, managing mitigation lands, contributing funds to joint conservation efforts, and implementing careful natural resource stewardship.

The Authority undertakes capital improvement projects such as trailhead staging areas and parking lots, and also performs habitat restoration and mitigation monitoring projects, all of which require compliance with CEQA and relevant regulatory permitting. We have strong, collaborative relationships with our regulatory agency partners, and greatly value the benefits they provide to protect our state's natural resources.

In Santa Clara County, OSA partners with a number of key natural resource and open space agencies including, but not limited to, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. The missions of OSA and these agencies include protecting and managing water resources and watershed lands, threatened and endangered species, and addressing the impact of climate change on natural resources.



The ability of local conservation agencies and special districts to effectively and efficiently partner to implement natural resource protection projects is largely dependent on regulatory permitting.

The Authority therefore supports efforts to streamline permitting processes, ensure funding to the regulatory agencies is sufficient to support timely processing of permit applications, and ensure permit application review is coordinated amongst the various agencies that have jurisdiction.

With best governance practices and streamlining of the permitting process, vital projects in Santa Clara County can proceed most expeditiously, to the benefit of the communities and the environment we all wish to support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Mackenzie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Andrea Mackenzie  
General Manager

Cc: Board of Directors, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority  
N. Camacho, Santa Clara Valley Water District  
E. Sullivan, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency  
S. Abbors, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District