

George Caloyannidis
2202 Diamond Mountain Road
Calistoga, CA 94515

May 16, 2020

RE: *Proposed Firesafe Agricultural Watershed Development Ordinance*

To: The Honorable Napa County Supervisors

Dear Supervisors,

My experience with Measure D has been cumbersome and expensive to both myself, to the generous funders who embraced its cause and to the Napa County taxpayers in defense of a subsequent frivolous lawsuit.

I attach the Draft of what at this point is a contemplated Voter Initiative for the year 2022, in the hope of avoiding this route if an Ordinance can accomplish that same objective before the end of May 2021 window of opportunity. Fully aware that the wheels of government are slow to turn, I must stress that once this time window is closed and legal and other expenses have been incurred, such window will close.

I am encouraged by the statements by all of you during the public hearings preceding Measure D arguing that a County Ordinance would have been a preferred route that such an alternative vehicle can be accomplished this time.

On the other hand, I like to remind you that in order to forestall Measure D, Mr. Frank Farella at his own expense through his law firm had submitted the language for an alternative Ordinance only to be asked by Staff to pay \$1,700.00 for it just to be considered. This ingratitude caused him to withdraw it resulting in the subsequent expensive process.

It is everyone's sincere hope that the upcoming fire season will not prove another deadly one but climate change points to the opposite scenario for decades to come.

Much organizational progress has been made since, especially by local citizen efforts in improving communications and obtaining limited public funds to minimize the quantity of fire fuel along some of the overgrown roads in the Agricultural Watershed. But as we have seen, failing communication infrastructure, power shutdowns and an overwhelmed fire personnel during rapidly spreading fire infernos do not guarantee orderly and gradual evacuations under the existing inadequate evacuation infrastructure. Major structural impediments exist. And as we have seen, they have been deadly.

The last Diamond Mountain Firewise Council meeting took place on February 29, 2020 just prior to the COVID-19 lockdown. Following expert presentations by CalFire officials and Wildfire consultant Carol Rice, some 100 attendees were presented the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire as to their desired actions to improve fire safety. They could be roughly sorted into immediate and long-term actions.

The first two immediate ones - removing hazardous vegetation and creating fuel breaks - received 59 combined votes but the next four on the list were long-term actions for improved access and escape routes which received a combined 61 votes.

Access and escape routes are considered by the Diamond Mountain and Kortum Canyon communities as life and death issues during a wildfire. The same concerns have been expressed by similarly situated communities on other western and eastern hills of the county. Inadequate access concerns were also cited by you in granting the recent appeal in the Hard Six Cellars winery application.

It is my sincere hope that the Board of Supervisors will prioritize consideration of this proposal so that our group can gain timely clarity as to its future action.

Sincerely,
George Caloyannidis