



AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

421 Aviation Way • Frederick, MD 21701-4798
Telephone (301) 695-2000 • Fax (301) 695-2375
www.aopa.org

July 3, 2007

Ms. Joyce Horizumi
Environmental Coordinator
Department of Environmental Review
Sacramento County
827 7th Street, Room 220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Draft EIR for Murieta Gardens Rezone, et. al.; Control Number 03-RZB-UPP-SPP-SDP-AHS-PRS-VAZ-0302

Dear Ms. Horizumi:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) represents the general aviation interests of 412,000 members, more than two-thirds of the nation's pilots – including over 50,000 members in the State of California. AOPA is committed to ensuring the future viability and economic development of general aviation airports and their facilities as part of a state and national transportation system.

AOPA is strongly opposed to the proposed rezoning and proposed development of the Murieta Gardens I and II project. It is our belief that this project is an incompatible use of land adjacent to a public use airport - Rancho Murieta Airport (RIU). It is the Association's view that actively pursuing a plan to allow 208 residences less than 1,000 feet from the end of the runway is a poor application of public policy and not in the best interest of ensuring public safety.

While the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) appears to indicate that the area encompassing the subject project as being in compliance with CalTrans Aviation Bureau Compatible Land Use Guidelines, our 68-years experience in issues such as this have shown us very clearly that future residents will complain to elected officials regarding normal airport operations. These complaints are usually in the form of a noise complaint or complaints of "low flying" aircraft flying over their property. Even though the traffic patterns for RIU should keep most aircraft south of the development, there may be occasional overflights from transient aircraft unfamiliar with the traffic patterns or from pilots exercising their responsibilities as Pilot in Command to resolve safety of flight issues.

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It is the Association's experience that allowing non-compatible land uses such as residential development adjacent to vibrant airports is one of the fundamental reasons and a root cause for the ultimate demise of the airport. Developers will build the homes, take their profits and move on to the next site, leaving local elected officials to deal with the concerns and complaints of the new airport neighbors.

In closing, we ask that the County reject approval of this project and not allow residential development in close proximity to Rancho Murieta Airport. Additionally, in order to prevent future incompatible land use near the airport, we recommend that the County adopt a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Rancho Murieta Airport in conformance with California Public Utilities Code (CPUC) Section 21670. Adopting such a plan would provide a more standardized process for reviewing proposed projects near the airport rather than relying on the generic State planning guidance, which is not airport specific. The airport land use plan could then be adopted and included in the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rancho Murieta.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this issue. If we can be of further assistance please contact me at 301-695-2200 or by e-mail at Bill.Dunn@aopa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Dunn', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bill Dunn
Vice President
Airports

cc: Mr. Michael Gilmore, Airport Manager, Rancho Murieta Airport
Mrs. Joanne McDermott, Associate Aviation Planner, CalTrans Division of Aeronautics
Mr. Andy Richards, Manager, FAA San Francisco Airports District Office
Mr. John Pfeifer, AOPA California Regional Representative
Mr. Walter Boeck, AOPA Airport Support Network Volunteer RIU