



## **UNITEHERE! LOCAL 2850**

East and North Bay's Union for hotel, foodservice, and gaming workers

**June 29, 2020**

**Dear Sonoma County Supervisors, BZA Commissioners and Permit Sonoma,**

The organizations signed onto this letter -- representing thousands of Sonoma County voters, residents and workers -- strongly urge you to uphold the voter-approved Community Separator protections that were passed with 81 percent in favor of Measure K in 2016. Please vote to deny or delay any action on the proposed luxury resort and event center at 3890 Old Redwood Highway (Buzzard's Gulch/Sonoma Solstice) in the heart of the key voter-protected Windsor-Larkfield-Santa Rosa Community Separator greenbelt. [Application # UPE16-0086 Parcel APN 58-020-009 - 3890 Old Redwood Highway, Santa Rosa]

The development conflicts with voter protections for community separators, as well as the General Plan and Zoning Code because it would intensify development and increase density by constructing a luxury resort hotel and major event center on rural community separator lands. It involves a multi-unit lodging subdivision as well as two warehouse-sized buildings, party tents, new paved road and large parking area accommodate 100 large drinking, dining and other events totaling 10,000 visitors annually from 10 am to 10 pm daily. New construction totals 23,025 square feet.

If this commercial visitor-serving use is allowed to proceed, it should go to vote of the people or be offset with new community separator lands of equal acreage per provisions in Measure K and the General Plan. Here are the reasons the BZA should deny the proposed Sonoma Solstice luxury resort:

- The land is inside the voter-protected (81 percent Measure K 2016) Santa Rosa-Larkfield-Windsor community separator, a stretch of greenbelt along Old Redwood Highway between Santa Rosa and Windsor.
- The project is located outside of Santa Rosa's voter-protected urban growth boundary, where urban development is supposed to end, as determined by voters of Santa Rosa twice (1996, 2010).

- Violates General Plan policy and Zoning Code by changing land use from residential and open space to luxury resort and event center all year round.
- It is in the heart of the wildfire burned areas of Fountaingrove and Larkfield Wikiup, and has not had proper fire escape planning implemented, which will put more people in harm's way in future wildfire events.
- It is next door to the historic Cloverleaf Ranch, an agricultural preserve and summer riding camp for children and teenagers, which is struggling to rebuild after the fires and COVID.
- A dozen luxury 1, 2, and 3-bedroom wine country party houses on rural land and when the county has failed to adopt any standards for event centers countywide.
- Hundreds of weddings and high-end events all year with wine and music until late at night, taking away from the scenic and agrarian feel of the area.
- Threatens the creek, groundwater, mature oaks, air, and climate with increased pollution.
- Will bring more low-paying tourist-serving jobs that will exacerbate the housing crisis, with no solutions offered by the developer for housing of employees.

**DELAY:** The proposed luxury development in the community separator is of countywide interest and inappropriate to move forward at this time with a public hearing and vote on the environmental review and project during COVID shutdown, political unrest, and economic uncertainty when voters, residents and workers are unable to fully participate.

**ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING SOLSTICE SONOMA LUXURY RESORT AT BUZZARDS GULCH – PLEASE RESPOND AND ADD TO STAKEHOLDER AND NOTIFICATION LIST**

**350 Sonoma** Founded in 2012 by Sonoma County residents, 350 Sonoma engages our community in the work of [350.org](http://350.org), the worldwide organization founded by Bill McKibben, and other local actions to demand action to restore atmospheric CO2 to safe levels. We seek to create a county-wide united purpose to speed us away from fossil fuels and accelerate our collective path to a zero-carbon footprint and a 100% clean energy future. [350SonomaCounty@gmail.com](mailto:350SonomaCounty@gmail.com) [350sonoma.org](http://350sonoma.org)

**Greenbelt Alliance** Greenbelt Alliance holistically addresses land-use issues across our region—from land conservation to smart growth development.

[TShore@greenbelt.org](mailto:TShore@greenbelt.org) [greenbelt.org](http://greenbelt.org)

**Preserve Rural Sonoma County** Preserve Rural Sonoma County works to protect the rural character of Sonoma County from the industrialization of agricultural lands caused by the encroachment of wine and spirits processing complexes/event centers. We educate, advocate and organize to protect our families and communities, watersheds and wildlife habitat, addressing traffic safety, noise impacts, infrastructure and other impacts on the quality of life. [preserveruralsonomacounty@gmail.com](mailto:preserveruralsonomacounty@gmail.com) [preserveruralsonomacounty.org](http://preserveruralsonomacounty.org)

**Sierra Club Sonoma Group** The mission of the Sierra Club is: To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. [songrp@sonic.net](mailto:songrp@sonic.net) [sierraclub.org/redwood/sonoma](http://sierraclub.org/redwood/sonoma)

**Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Coalition** Mission: Develop transportation and land-use policies that create developments with a sense of community, and that reduce and even eliminate auto-dependency. Reframe housing and transportation issues: from “building housing” to “housing people,” from “providing transportation” to “moving people and goods.” Find the means to fund public transit operations. [sonomatic.org](http://sonomatic.org)

**Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway** Started in 2009, the Southeast Greenway Campaign is a community effort to transform the vacant two-mile corridor of open space connecting Spring Lake Park and Farmers Lane into a vibrant urban greenway that will serve as a strategic link in our regional non-motorized transportation system and improve our quality of life. [info@SoutheastGreenway.org](mailto:info@SoutheastGreenway.org)  
[southeastgreenway.org](http://southeastgreenway.org)

**Unite Here Local 2850** UNITE HERE! Local 2850 is the East and North Bay’s Union for hotel, foodservice, and gaming workers! 510-316-1672 [unitehere2850.org](http://unitehere2850.org)

**Wine and Water Watch** We challenge the over-development of the wine tourism industry and promote ethical land and water use. We advocate agricultural practices that are ecologically regenerative. [winewaterwatch.org](http://winewaterwatch.org)