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Dear Mayor Harmon and City Council members,

As the largest business organization in San Luis Obispo County, representing approximately 1,400 members that employ nearly 34,000 employees throughout San Luis Obispo County, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce respectfully submits the following comments regarding the San Luis Ranch proposal.

Our community faces a severe housing shortage that has been exacerbated over the last decade due to the lack of homebuilding in our community. The San Luis Ranch project is one critical opportunity to achieve more housing to address the significant gap. We urge you to move forward at this time as responsibly and expeditiously as possible.

This project furthers your Council goal – established after tremendous input from the city’s residents during the extensive goal setting process this year – to create more housing in our community for our workforce. It creatively proposes to give priority to those who work in San Luis Obispo, incorporates deed restrictions to encourage an owner-occupied community, and is designed with sustainability in mind as it relates to both the homes themselves and also how the project fits within the community.

We have averaged a dismal .035% growth rate in housing over the last 10 years, which has significant environmental, social and economic consequences for the future of our city and the region as a whole. For people already here, prohibitive housing costs mean that employees are spending a higher proportion of their income on a place to live than is economically wise. This has the greatest impact on renters and lower income households and creates housing insecurity for so many in our community.

By not providing enough housing we are forcing individuals and families to find appropriate housing further away from where they work, which impacts greenhouse gas emissions (our county’s commuting patterns are the greatest contributor to these emissions already), limiting their ability to be close to their kids schools, opportunities to volunteer and give back to the

community, and the amount of disposable income left to spend outside of housing and transportation. These are just some of the impacts that are felt.

The non-partisan Legislative Analyst Office for the state notes in its February 2016 *Perspectives on Helping Low Income Californians Afford Housing* that adding more supply- even at the higher end of the housing market- indirectly adds to the supply of the lower end of the market. As housing becomes less desirable as its ages, middle income households often seek to move from older, more affordable housing into new housing. And as they move, more housing becomes available for lower-income households.

In fact, an article in the *Los Angeles Times* dated June 29, 2017, entitled “California lawmakers have tried for 50 years to fix the state's housing crisis. Here's why they've failed,” notes that the “primary driver of the affordability problem is a lack of home building.”

The article goes on to note, that “More than two-thirds of California’s coastal communities have adopted measures — such as caps on population or housing growth, or building height limits — aimed at limiting residential development, according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office. A UC Berkeley study of California’s local land-use regulations found that every growth-control policy a city puts in place raises housing costs by as much as 5% there.”

According to the same article, San Luis Obispo city met just 44% of its housing goal in California’s most recent eight-year housing plan which ended in 2014, or only 678 of the necessary 1,590 homes.

We need every tool in our tool box to have more affordable housing opportunities for our community. Building more housing – including homes that are more affordable by design as this project proposes- is critical to helping those who would like to live here the opportunity to put down roots as others before them have been able to do and become part of the community fabric.

The timing of this project is especially critical. As our community faces the closure of Diablo Canyon and the loss of many high-wage jobs in our community, we need to continue to thoughtfully plan for job creation in this community. We know that employee recruitment and retention– private and public alike- is deeply affected by the severe shortage of housing diversity in our community. This impacts our community’s ability to have access to the doctors, nurses, and teachers we need as well as the makers and the innovators. We need this planned housing for both our future workforce and for those that already live here and depend on these services.

This project also proposes to address numerous infrastructure improvements that provide both neighborhood and communitywide benefit. The project proposes a new agricultural heritage learning center, abundant open space, multi-use parks, trails and paths, and bike lanes as well as key road connections that will help to reduce existing infrastructure challenges in our community.

The San Luis Ranch project comes before you for approval this week after many years of planning as well as rigorous oversight by your advisory bodies, including the Architectural Review Commission, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Cultural Heritage Committee, Parks and Recreation

Committee and the Planning Commission. There have been hours of public testimony, hundreds of letters providing input, and many hours of deliberation. Now it is time for the City Council to approve the work done by your advisory bodies and act on behalf of all of those individuals who are in San Luis Obispo already and want the opportunity to make their life here.

We urge you to remain focused on the city's vision – shaped by the input of so many over time – to benefit the greatest number of individuals and families in our community for years and generations to come.

Thank you for considering our input.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ermina Karim". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Best,".

Ermina Karim