



Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

March 27, 2023

John Parke, Chairman, 3rd district
Santa Barbara County Planning Commission
c/o Planning and Development
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re : Brodiaea Inc./ North Fork Ranch Frost Pond Project

Chairman Parke:

The Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, a nonprofit California corporation representing approximately 500 agricultural and associate members in Santa Barbara County, supports the construction and use of 3 agricultural frost pond/ reservoirs on the North Fork Vineyard, located near the western end of the Cuyama Valley.

Brodiaea Inc, received a Zoning Administrator hearing after a 20-month permit and environmental review process in 2019. The Zoning Administrator found the construction of the three reservoirs met all county standards. The Zoning Administrator approved the CEQA Mitigated Negative declaration, including a determination the construction of the reservoirs fell beneath the threshold of significance for water use. The Zoning Administrator concurred with County Staff's determination that agricultural water use and the associated development of wells, as exempt activities and are not considered a "project" under CEQA.

The reservoir installation decision by the Zoning administrator was appealed to the Planning Commission who voted to instruct staff to prepare a focused EIR evaluating water use. The EIR process took five years to complete and was paid for by the landowner. We understand that the EIR lists several mitigation categories which the landowners are willing to include as part of the construction of the proposed frost ponds so this project can finally move forward.

We strongly urge the Planning Commission to approve the Conditional Use permit and allow the construction of three water storage frost ponds/reservoirs located in an existing vineyard approximately 9 miles west of New Cuyama.

Reservoirs and frost/protection ponds are and historically have been an integral part of irrigated agriculture here in Santa Barbara County as well as the State. They help maximize the farmers' ability to manage the water they legally have access to, while allowing them to be more flexible and efficient in their water use.

The applicant has met all of Santa Barbara Counties permitting requirements for constructing these reservoirs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheldon Bosio'.

Sheldon Bosio, President
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau