



September 25, 2025

The Honorable Terra Lawson-Remer, Chair
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego CA 92102

**RE: Harmony Grove Village South General Plan Amendment, Item 4, October 1, 2025
– Opposition**

Dear Chair Lawson-Remer and Board Members:

The undersigned organizations urge *denial* of this General Plan amendment as inconsistent with the Board's direction for sustainable land use. Specifically, the proposed up-zoning is contrary to the 2024 Updated Climate Action Plan goals of low vehicle miles traveled, reduced GHG emissions and low fire risk. Rather, the rural site is in a Very High Fire Severity Zone adjacent to 15,000 acres of contiguous rural open space, far from transit, and shelters sensitive wildlife. It is the very definition of the sprawl we wish to curtail.

Additionally, the site is located within a Priority Conservation Area in the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) draft North and is directly adjacent to properties supporting the state and federal endangered least Bell's vireo, the federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, the endangered Southwestern Willow flycatcher and near Escondido Creek areas supporting the proposed for federal threatened status Southwestern pond turtle.

The fire danger here is acute. *Contrary to state fire code requirements, there is no functional secondary egress route in a community that has suffered numerous, large-scale wildfire events over the years, with hundreds of structures lost and even a fatality.* Numerous independent fire and evacuation experts are warning that, if built, there is an unacceptably high risk for

entrapment during common wind-driven fire events. Standard dead-end road length requirements should not be waived in areas with such high risk. Evacuation catastrophes like Paradise and Pacific Palisades teach us that *preventing* dangerous situations should be your highest priority.

The County has more than ample capacity for accommodating growth at all income levels within current Village designations. The proposed discretionary land use change is not needed. There is no good reason to risk public safety and the environment for the sake of this speculative suburban sprawl project.

Thank you for considering our views.

Patti Langen, President
Buena Vista Audubon Society

Richard Halsey, Executive Director
Chapparral Institute

Tiffany Yap, DEnv/PhD, Senior Scientist
Center for Biological Diversity

Duncan McFetridge, Executive Director
Cleveland National Forest Foundation

Nicole Capretz, Executive Director
Climate Action Campaign

Marco Gonzalez, Executive Director
Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation

Dan Silver, Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Pamela Heatherington, Board of Directors
The Environmental Center of San Diego

Ann Van Leer, Executive Director
Escondido Creek Conservancy

Jerry Harmon
Friends of Daley Ranch

Sandra Farrell, President
Friends of Hedionda Creek

Beth Pearson, President
Palomar Audubon Society

Diane Nygaard, President
Preserve Calavera

Jeffrey W. Schmidt, President
Preserve Wild Poway

Van Collinsworth, Director
Preserve Wild Santee

Bart Zeigler, Executive Director
Samuel Lawrence Foundation

Chris Roberts, Transportation Team lead
San Diego 350

Muriel Spooner and Jim Peugh, Co-chairs
Conservation Committee
San Diego Bird Alliance

Lisa Ross, Board of Directors
Sierra Club San Diego County

Jack Eidt, Executive Director
SoCal 350

Michael A. McCoy, President
Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association

Anne Middleton, Associate Director
WILDCOAST

From: [Jessie Dummer](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgtc@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] Harmony Grove Village South; Public Comment for 10/1/25 Meeting
Date: Thursday, September 25, 2025 6:40:30 PM

Dear Chair Lawson-Remer and Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my opposition to the plan for Harmony Grove Village South, as it does not include the creation of a secondary access route. If 453 dwelling units will be added to Harmony Grove, a secondary access route is absolutely necessary to ensure that all residents can safely evacuate during a fire.

The project site for Harmony Grove Village South is located in an area designated by CalFire as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and there have been numerous fires in the direct vicinity of the project site. The Cocos Fire in 2014 burned up to the project site while the 1997 Del Dios Fire burned directly on the project site.

Additionally, the frequency and severity of wildfires in California generally have increased in recent years. Rather than a single fire, we now see regions being consumed by multiple blazes simultaneously, which overwhelm firefighting resources. Rather than assuming abundant firefighting personnel will always be available to direct evacuations, in making planning decisions, we must now contemplate what will happen when San Diego's firefighting resources are pushed to the brink.

Given the location of the project site and the increase in wildfires generally, it is a question of when and not if Harmony Grove Village South will be threatened by wildfire. Knowing this, a secondary access route can and should be built as part of Harmony Grove Village South. Traffic gridlock during an evacuation will endanger residents and complicate firefighting efforts. A secondary access route is needed to prevent such gridlock during a fast-moving blaze.

Now is the best (and cheapest) opportunity to make sure that the right infrastructure is in place for Harmony Grove Village South when wildfires occur. Please do not approve the plan for Harmony Grove Village South without a requirement for the construction of a secondary access route.

Sincerely,

Jessie Dummer

From: [Aaron Lamoree](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgct@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] terra.lawson-remer@sdcounty.ca.gov, joel.anderson@sdcounty.ca.gov, monica.montgomerysteppe@sdcounty.ca.gov, Jim.Desmond@sdcounty.ca.gov, PA@sdcounty.ca.gov, Andrew.Potter@sdcounty.ca.gov, PublicComment@sdcounty.ca.gov, Paul.Worlie@sdcounty.c...
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 8:45:33 AM

Hello Chair Lawson-Remer and board:

When my pregnant wife and I moved into Elfin Forest four years ago to start our family, we knew there was a fire risk. The community has caught fire many times. Looking at the zoning of the area, we saw that it was zoned for lower density due to the fire risk and lack of evacuation infrastructure. For that reason we felt that the risk was acceptable. We'd learn how to evacuate quickly and get out of harm's way at the earliest possible time.

However, at a recent community meeting we learned that a developer was seeking to undo that zoning by adding another 453 homes in the brush covered area south of the Escondido Creek. This area is notoriously flammable and has only one way in and one way out. Incredibly, we learned that the county planners are recommending approving this project without a secondary access.

And on top of that, the fire chief, who we hold in much esteem, told us that the project doesn't actually meet today's safety standards without secondary access. "It would not pass today" are the exact words he said. It barely meets the 2018 standards from when the project first was voted on. I don't think I have to tell you that much has changed since 2018. We've seen close to 50,000 homes burn down all over California. We've seen hundreds of fatalities (many due to evacuation issues) and the state and local codes have tightened up considerably.

What we also learned in that same community meeting last week was that on one end of the valley, with HGV South built, 3500 vehicles will hit our narrow little roads all at once. The county never did a community-wide analysis (though we asked) of what the evacuation would look like under the fully built-out conditions, so the community had to raise funds to conduct their own study. It showed an almost-certainty of entrapment with 7 hours or more to evacuate the community (the fire arrival time is conservatively 1 to 2 hours).

The deputy chief at the very same meeting told us, in stark terms: "you better get used to sheltering in place because evacuation is not likely to be safe." That's sobering news because even the most fire-hardened homes burn down (45% burned down during Camp Fire and higher percentages in the Tubbs and Paradise fires). And closely spaced homes are the most at risk according to the extensive research done on California fire structure loss.

It is a terrible choice to make. This HGVS project will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. The next fire that comes through here will likely be before some of you retire. If you vote yes, you are owning whatever the consequences are.

Please vote no on this project or at the bare minimum enforce the secondary access requirement.

Respectfully,
Aaron Lamoree



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Steve Walsh](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgtd@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] HGV South development
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 9:36:51 AM

Dear elected and appointed officials:

Don't approve HGV South as designed. During the Cocos Fire evacuation it took me 35 minutes to travel about 400 yards on Hill Valley Drive to get onto Country Club Drive and that was before the original Harmony Grove development was built. I have been to Paradise in Northern California many times on disaster relief teams and it's easy to see why so many people died during their fire. The community had very inadequate emergency exits for its size and our present standards for fire exits were adopted to keep that from happening elsewhere. Why would you not want to adhere to the standards developed to prevent this kind of thing happening to us here right where we live? DO NOT APPROVE!

Respectfully, Steve Walsh

Sent from my iPad

From: [Cheri Smith](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgte@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] Harmony Grove South
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 10:18:34 AM

As a 5th generation Californian and a long time Elfin Forest resident, this project stinks. The shameful behavior of an out of state billionaire buying support from our supposedly public representatives, the corrupt tactics of his minions, is this really what you want to put your stamp of approval on? Is this what you believe honest, law-abiding citizens you represent want to support? Yes, some kind of development may well be suitable for this area of Harmony Grove, albeit with new and appropriate fire safety requirements, but this, this boondoggle of out of state greed and massive deception must be halted. Do the right thing and do not approve this Harmony Grove South project.

Thank you.

Cheri L. Smith

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [Jan Hall](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgte@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] Colorado Billionaire Shouldn't Decide Our Safety - Say No to HGVS
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 10:44:02 AM

Dear Chair Lawson-Remer, board members and staff:

We've lived in Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove community for 35 years. We've been through multiple big fires, and the fear sticks with you. During the 2014 Cocos Fire, the wind flipped, about 30 homes burned, and it took us almost two hours just to get a few miles out. Back then, the village site was just dirt, and even that helped slow the flames. Roads were jammed even with far fewer cars.

Now Harmony Grove Village is built (the community actually testified in favor of the project back in 2011). We love our new neighbors, but evacuations are going to be seriously constricted: so many vehicles trying to get out on the same narrow roads. Years ago the County told us the safe place for growth was north of the creek, near the old egg ranch which is why we supported HGV. South of the creek was a dead-end fire-prone bowl unless there's a second way out. County even removed a proposed road to Del Dios Highway from the road plans. It's the main reason none of us can get insurance – we're surrounded by brush and no way out.

HGV South would add another 1000 cars onto the same routes that were gridlocked back in 2014. And to make things worse, the County felt it was ok to give a Colorado billionaire a waiver for secondary access in a bowl that has repeatedly caught fire throughout the years. The County never modeled a full community evacuation (even though we asked repeatedly); they looked only at the immediate project area. We had to fundraise and pay for an independent expert, and the verdict was sobering: entrapment is likely. His analysis showed that it would take seven hours or more to evacuate everyone, but fires arrive much sooner.

Our fire chief also recently acknowledged HGV South wouldn't pass today's standards without a secondary access. Please vote no on HGV South, or at least require real secondary access. Our safety has to come first.

Respectfully,
Jan Hall
Sent from my iPhone

September 25, 2025

The Hon. Terra Lawson-Remer, Chair
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego CA 92102

RE: Expert Comments on Harmony Grove Village South (HGVS) – Safety, Ignition, and Evacuation Risk in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

We are wildfire scientists and safety professionals with expertise in Southern California chaparral landscapes. We are providing these comments on the proposed Harmony Grove Village South (HGVS) project to inform the Board's decision-making regarding public safety. Based on peer-reviewed research and state and national fire safety guidance, we find that the project would expose residents and surrounding communities to extreme wildfire risk.

Below we summarize three primary areas of concern:

- A. Increased ignition likelihood from new development,
- B. Evacuation times that would exceed wildfire arrival times, and
- C. The absence of any viable population-level protection strategy if evacuation fails.

A. New development will increase ignition likelihood in a highly flammable landscape

Adding hundreds of homes in this location would measurably increase the number of human-caused ignitions in the region, compounding risk to both the new development and existing communities.

- Over 95% of ignitions in cismontane San Diego County are human-caused, and most occur near development and along roads¹ (Keeley & Syphard 2018; Syphard & Keeley).
- Developments surrounded by vegetation, especially at low-to-intermediate densities, experience higher ignition and loss risks² (Syphard et al. 2012, 2019).
- However, once a fire reaches a developed area, high-density development then becomes a risk factor through structure-to-structure spread^{3 4} (Zamanialaei et al. 2025; Knapp et al)
- The site lies within CAL FIRE's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) and has a history of wind-driven, ember-dominated fires (e.g., the 2014 Cocos Fire, Del Dios Fire, Harmony Grove Fire, etc.).
- The proposed project is accessed primarily via Country Club Drive, a two-lane collector bordered by vegetated corridors that funnel traffic toward a limited-capacity intersection network.

¹ Keeley, J.E. and Syphard, A.D., 2018. Historical patterns of wildfire ignition sources in California ecosystems. *International journal of wildland fire*, 27(12), pp.781-799.

² Syphard, A.D., Keeley, J.E., Massada, A.B., Brennan, T.J. and Radeloff, V.C., 2012. Housing arrangement and location determine the likelihood of housing loss due to wildfire. *PloS one*, 7(3), p.e33954.

³ Zamanialaei, M., San Martin, D., Theodori, M., Purnomo, D.M.J., Tohidi, A., Lautenberger, C., Qin, Y., Trouvé, A. and Gollner, M., 2025. Fire risk to structures in California's Wildland-Urban Interface. *Nature Communications*, 16(1), p.8041.

⁴ Knapp, E.E., Valachovic, Y.S., Quarles, S.L. et al. Housing arrangement and vegetation factors associated with single-family home survival in the 2018 Camp Fire, California. *Fire Ecology* 17, 25 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42408-021-00117-0>.

- New construction, landscaping, and fuel breaks promote flammable invasive grass growth, further raising ignition risk^{5 6 7 8 9} (Fusco et al.; West et al. 2023; Brennan & Keeley 2017; Syphard et al. 2018, 2019).

B. Evacuation time likely to exceed wildfire lead time under common wind scenarios

Under plausible wind-driven fire scenarios, evacuation clearance times would exceed wildfire arrival times, creating foreseeable conditions for mass entrapment.

- The road network is constrained to narrow, vegetation-lined two-lane collectors feeding into a limited-capacity intersection network.
- If built, approximately 3,500 vehicles¹⁰ would rely on the same primary route (Country Club Drive), adding ~1,000 new vehicles to an already burdened corridor¹¹ that has seen evacuation challenges in the past.¹²
- Analyses using the County’s own capacity assumptions estimate 6.9–10+ hours to clear the area, while a Santa Ana-driven fire could reach the community in under one hour under conservative, realistic assumptions.¹³
- The project lacks true secondary access.¹⁴ A variance to the State Fire Safe Regulations’ dead-end road standard was granted despite the site being in a VHFHSZ surrounded by approximately 15,000 acres of contiguous open space.
- State and local Fire Safe Regulations (§1273.08)¹⁵ prohibit dead-end roads longer than 800 feet unless two independent evacuation routes are provided. Widening a single route does not satisfy the standard’s intent, as confirmed by a CAL FIRE–sponsored review of the regulation.¹⁶
- Any single obstruction — a crash, downed utility pole, or advancing fire front — could cut off all egress, preventing thousands of residents from safely evacuating.

⁵ Fusco, E.J., Balch, J.K., Mahood, A.L., Nagy, R.C., Syphard, A.D. and Bradley, B.A., 2022. The human–grass–fire cycle: how people and invasives co-occur to drive fire regimes. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 20(2), pp.117-126.

⁶ West, K.R., 2023. *Satellite-derived estimates of herbaceous fractional cover and its influence on fire regime in San Diego County, California, USA shrublands* (Doctoral dissertation, San Diego State University).

⁷ Brennan, T.J. and Keeley, J.E., 2017. Impacts of mastication fuel treatments on California, USA, chaparral vegetation structure and composition. *Fire Ecology*, 13(3), pp.120-138.

⁸ Syphard et al.2018

⁹ Syphard et al.2019

¹⁰ Dr. Tom Cova, PhD, University of Utah, 2024, “Harmony Grove Village South would compromise wildfire public safety” (p.4) ([link](#))

¹¹ Cova (p.4)

¹² KPBS, May 2014, “Harmony Grove Residents Worry About Fire Evacuation Routes” ([link](#), retrieved 9/5/2025)

¹³ Cova (p.5)

¹⁴ June 2017, “Harmony Grove Village South – Draft EIR, Wildfire Risk Analysis and Mitigation Measures” Dr. Matthew Rahn, PhD, MA, JD, California State University San Marcos, Director, Wildfire Science and Urban Interface Program (p. 11) ([link](#))

¹⁵ Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 1273.08 - Dead-End Roads and County of San Diego Consolidated Fire Code (2023) Sec. 503.1.2 Secondary Access

¹⁶ February 2016, W. David Conn et al, “Single-Access Subdivisions Assessment Project” *California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo* (Executive Summary, p. iv) ([link](#))

C. “Shelter in place” is not a viable population-level safety strategy

The project proposes to rely on sheltering in place if evacuation becomes infeasible, but this approach has no basis in U.S. fire safety standards and cannot protect thousands of residents in a fast-moving wildfire.

- While Chapter 7A construction reduces the probability of structure ignition, it does not prevent structure-to-structure fire spread under extreme conditions, particularly with homes that are closely spaced.
- For example, 56% of homes built to Chapter 7A standards were destroyed in the 2018 Camp Fire¹⁷.
- There are no U.S. population-level SIP standards for WUI fires, and no operational evidence that thousands of residents could survive entrapment inside standard homes.
- SIP is an emergency tactic for isolated individuals, not a population protection strategy.

Conclusion

The record indicates that adding a large population to a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone at the terminus of a constrained, vegetation-lined two-lane corridor creates foreseeable conditions where evacuation clearance times could exceed wildfire lead times during common wind events. Because the project cannot evacuate residents within fire arrival times, it does not meet fundamental fire safety principles and presents an elevated and preventable life safety risk to new and existing residents.

We urge County leaders to place **public safety above speculative development**, and to require that large-scale projects in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones provide **true secondary access** before approval or reject them entirely.

Respectfully,

Vytenis (“Vyto”) Babrauskas, PhD — Adjunct Teaching Professor (Fire Protection Engineering), Worcester Polytechnic Institute; President, Fire Science & Technology, Inc. Cited 8,400+ times.

Janice L. Coen, PhD — Project Scientist, Mesoscale & Microscale Meteorology Laboratory, NCAR; developer of the CAWFE model; Associate Editor, *Int. J. Wildland Fire*. Cited 5,900+ times.

Louise K. Comfort, PhD — Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley Civil & Environmental Engineering; Professor Emerita, Graduate School of Public & International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh; Former Director, Center for Disaster Management (2009–2017). Cited ~13,400 times.

Megan K. Jennings, PhD — Research Scientist and Assistant Adjunct Professor of Biology, San Diego State University; Co-Director, Institute for Ecological Monitoring and Management, San Diego State University. Cited 891 times.

Matthew E. Rahn, PhD, J.D. — Program Director, Wildfire Science & the Urban Interface, California State University San Marcos. Cited ~107 times.

Alexandra D. Sypard, PhD — Adjunct Professor of Geography, San Diego State University; Senior Research Scientist, Conservation Biology Institute. Cited ~13,436 times.

Tiffany A. Yap, PhD, D.Env. — Senior Scientist, Center for Biological Diversity; expert on impacts of land use planning on wildfire risk and wildlife connectivity. Prior research cited 300+ times

¹⁷ Knapp, *et al* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42408-021-00117-0>.

From: pvsuccess19@aol.com
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); efhgtc@gmail.com; [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); mcquead@rsf-fire.org; ashcraft@rsf-fire.org; hillgren@rsf-fire.org; malin@rsf-fire.org; stine@rsf-fire.org; [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] WE LIVE IN THE HARMONY GROVE FIRE ZONE AND LIVED THRU THE COCOS FIRE
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 11:04:35 AM

WE OPPOSE ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS, TOO MUCH TRAFFIC ALREADY ON COUNTRY CLUB LANE AND HARMONY GROVE. ALSO A LOT MORE NEW BUSINESSES WITH POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS HAVE OPENED UP SINCE COCOS FIRE.

RESIDENTS OF MORE THAN 34 YEARS.

WHEN WE EVACUATED FROM THE COCOS FIRE, THE ENTIRE COUNTRY CLUB LANE WAS CLOGGED DUE TO NUMEROUS HORSE TRANSPORTS, PEOPLE EVACUATING IN RVS, and TRUCKS.

SIGNED
PEDRO V GONZALEZ AND MARIA

From: [Greg White](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgtc@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] terra.lawson-remer@sdcounty.ca.gov, joel.anderson@sdcounty.ca.gov, monica.montgomerysteppe@sdcounty.ca.gov, Jim.Desmond@sdcounty.ca.gov, PA@sdcounty.ca.gov, Andrew.Potter@sdcounty.ca.gov, PublicComment@sdcounty.ca.gov, Paul.Worlie@sdcounty.c...
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 12:49:44 PM

Hello Chair Lawson-Remer and board:

When we moved into Harmony Grove, we knew there was a fire risk. The community has caught fire many times. Looking at the zoning of the area, we saw that it was zoned for lower density due to the fire risk and lack of evacuation infrastructure. For that reason we felt that the risk was acceptable. We'd learn how to evacuate quickly and get out of harm's way at the earliest possible time.

However, at a recent community meeting we learned that a developer was seeking to undo that zoning by adding another 453 homes in the brush covered area south of the Escondido Creek. This area is notoriously flammable and has only one way in and one way out. Incredibly, we learned that the county planners are recommending approving this project without a secondary access.

And on top of that, the fire chief, who we hold in much esteem, told us that the project doesn't actually meet today's safety standards without secondary access. "It would not pass today" are the exact words he said. It barely meets the 2018 standards from when the project first was voted on. I don't think I have to tell you that much has changed since 2018. We've seen close to 50,000 homes burn down all over California. We've seen hundreds of fatalities (many due to evacuation issues) and the state and local codes have tightened up considerably.

What we also learned in that same community meeting last week was that on one end of the valley, with HGV South built, 3500 vehicles will hit our narrow little roads all at once. The county never did a community-wide analysis (though we asked) of what the evacuation would look like under the fully built-out conditions, so the community had to raise funds to conduct their own study. It showed an almost-certainty of entrapment with 7 hours or more to evacuate the community (the fire arrival time is conservatively 1 to 2 hours).

The deputy chief at the very same meeting told us, in stark terms: "you better get used to sheltering in place because evacuation is not likely to be safe." That's sobering news because even the most fire-hardened homes burn down (45% burned down during Camp Fire and higher percentages in the Tubbs and Paradise fires). And closely spaced homes are the most at risk according to the extensive research done on California fire structure loss.

It is a terrible choice to make. This HGVS project will be the straw that breaks the camel's back. The next fire that comes through here will likely be before some of you retire. If you vote yes, you are owning whatever the consequences are.

Please vote no on this project or at the bare minimum enforce the secondary access requirement.

Respectfully,

Greg White



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Greg White](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aquirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhtc@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] Re: terra.lawson-remer@sdcounty.ca.gov, joel.anderson@sdcounty.ca.gov, monica.montgomerysteppe@sdcounty.ca.gov, Jim.Desmond@sdcounty.ca.gov, PA@sdcounty.ca.gov, Andrew.Potter@sdcounty.ca.gov, PublicComment@sdcounty.ca.gov, Paul.Worlie@sdcount...
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 2:28:39 PM

Our community will be present in numbers to oppose the project, and expose the bad decisions, and decision makers, that have lead up to this approval hearing.

Greg

Gregory White

On Sep 26, 2025, at 12:49 PM, Greg White <gregory.jay.white@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Chair Lawson-Remer and board:

When we moved into Harmony Grove, we knew there was a fire risk. The community has caught fire many times. Looking at the zoning of the area, we saw that it was zoned for lower density due to the fire risk and lack of evacuation infrastructure. For that reason we felt that the risk was acceptable. We'd learn how to evacuate quickly and get out of harm's way at the earliest possible time.

However, at a recent community meeting we learned that a developer was seeking to undo that zoning by adding another 453 homes in the brush covered area south of the Escondido Creek. This area is notoriously flammable and has only one way in and one way out. Incredibly, we learned that the county planners are recommending approving this project without a secondary access.

And on top of that, the fire chief, who we hold in much esteem, told us that the project doesn't actually meet today's safety standards without secondary access. "It would not pass today" are the exact words he said. It barely meets the 2018 standards from when the project first was voted on. I don't think I have to tell you that much has changed since 2018. We've seen close to 50,000 homes burn down all over California. We've seen hundreds of fatalities (many due to evacuation issues) and the state and local codes have tightened up considerably.

What we also learned in that same community meeting last week was that on one end of the valley, with HGV South built, 3500 vehicles will hit our narrow little roads all at once. The county never did a community-wide analysis (though we asked) of what the evacuation would look like under the fully built-out conditions, so the community had to raise funds to conduct their own study. It showed an almost-certainty of entrapment with 7 hours or more to evacuate the community (the fire arrival time is conservatively 1 to 2 hours).

The deputy chief at the very same meeting told us, in stark terms: “you better get used to sheltering in place because evacuation is not likely to be safe.” That’s sobering news because even the most fire-hardened homes burn down (45% burned down during Camp Fire and higher percentages in the Tubbs and Paradise fires). And closely spaced homes are the most at risk according to the extensive research done on California fire structure loss.

It is a terrible choice to make. This HGVS project will be the straw that breaks the camel’s back. The next fire that comes through here will likely be before some of you retire. If you vote yes, you are owning whatever the consequences are.

Please vote no on this project or at the bare minimum enforce the secondary access requirement.

Respectfully,

Greg White

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bill Tippets](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgtc@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] Prioritize Safety - Vote No on Harmony Grove Village South
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 2:40:31 PM

Dear Members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident and environmentalist regarding the proposed Harmony Grove Village South project. I urge you to reject this development, as it epitomizes urban sprawl that threatens to undo all the hard work the County has done on its Climate Action Plan and its efforts to limit sprawl and encourage infill.

This is not the kind of development that the County should be approving, for reasons of public health safety, open space conservation, and addressing its Climate Action Plan.

The project is not served by transit and will increase the county's Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as it is significantly higher than the County-wide average. And it will generate more GHGs than it is claiming it can offset. In addition, during the next wildfire, the potential for gridlock will pose a serious risk to the nearby communities. Independent experts have shown that, due to inadequate secondary egress, it poses a serious entrapment risk. This is absolutely unacceptable in view of the recent Palisades and Altadena evacuation catastrophes.

Increased VMT and driving distances will lead to greater carbon emissions, more sprawl and further contribute to climate change. The community itself is mostly rural, known for its wildlife, open space reserves, and natural beauty. We must protect areas like this from irresponsible developments that prioritize profit over public safety and ecological integrity.

Additionally, the site is listed as a Priority Conservation Area in the Multiple Species Conservation Area (MSCP) North draft. It is directly adjacent to lands supporting state and federal endangered least Bell's vireo, federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher, the endangered Southwestern Willow flycatcher and near the Escondido Creek which supports the proposed federal threatened status Southwestern pond turtle.

The position of this project within the wildland urban interface (WUI) flies in the face of a wide body of research that shows that these are the communities that suffer the most losses during wildfire events. This community has already experienced the devastating effects of wildfires numerous times over the years (most recently, the Cocos Fire), with limited evacuation infrastructure.

I strongly urge you to consider the long-term implications of approving the Harmony Grove Village South project.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Bill Tippetts



"I prefer peace. But if trouble must come, let it come in my time, so that my children can live in peace."

Thomas Paine

From: [stacy mccline](#)
To: [Lawson-Remer, Terra](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#); [Desmond, Jim](#); [Aguirre, Paloma x](#); [Potter, Andrew](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#); [Worlie, Paul](#); [LaVelle, Kyle](#); [Hayes, Andrew](#); [Yuen, Jeffrey](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [McDonald, Hunter](#); [Lynch, Dahvia](#); [Harbert, Amy](#); [Slovick, Mark](#); [efhgtc@gmail.com](#); [Lorenzana, Bianca](#); [Montagne, Sarah](#); [mcquead@rsf-fire.org](#); [ashcraft@rsf-fire.org](#); [hillgren@rsf-fire.org](#); [malin@rsf-fire.org](#); [stine@rsf-fire.org](#); [Nicoletti, Vince](#)
Subject: [External] HGVS = Gridlock, Danger, and Lost Lives
Date: Friday, September 26, 2025 2:58:22 PM

Dear Chair Lawson-Remer and Members of the Board,

I survived the Witch Creek Fire, but my home did not.

The terror of that event is still with me. The uncertainty of knowing whether or not our house survived, and finding out it did not, changed the course of my life and that of my family.

For Harmony Grove, it was even faster fire event. We saw the fire on the hill and it moved very fast down towards Harmony Grove Spiritualists and the area where HGV South is being proposed. There is nothing scarier than seeing your neighbors wrestle livestock trailers and unruly animals to try to get them out in time. The evacuation took at least 2 hours. And that was before any developments in the community.

As a community, we're well aware of the fire danger. We keep "go bags" at the ready. We load our trailers every time there is a red flag warning. Some of my neighbors are third generation residents and have seen the many fires (once a decade) that have ravaged this little valley. We've lost hundreds of homes over the years and even suffered fatalities. We are all prepared for the next wildfire. What we are not prepared for, however, is the entrapment that is in store for us with a community that continues to accept (and support) additional housing but without any major improvements in the evacuation infrastructure.

My friends in Harmony Grove barely made it out during the Cocos Fire and that was a few hundred cars and dozens of livestock trailers. If HGV South is built, the total number of vehicles evacuating during the next fire will number in the thousands. Nationally renowned evacuation experts have analyzed the area and estimate it will take 7 hours to evacuate, but the fire arrives within an hour or two. This can only mean entrapment.

We cannot gamble with human lives just because a billionaire from Colorado throws a bunch of money at our fire district, our unions and our elected officials. Please vote no on Harmony Grove Village South or at least require a secondary access. Put community safety ahead of development interests.

Thank you for your leadership and for protecting the people you represent.

Sincerely,
Stacy McCline