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February 25, 2013

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Update of County Riparian Ordinance

Supervisors,

In May of 2012 the County of Santa Cruz Fish And Game Advisory Commission sent a letter to your Board with recommendations for updating Chapter 16.30 of the County Code, Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection. We have reviewed this letter and the subsequent response, in August 2012, from the Planning Director. We understand that this Ordinance is in the process of being revised at the direction of your Board.

We are writing to voice our support of the recommendations outlined in the Fish and Game Advisory Commission letter of May 8, 2012. We share the Commission's concern, as stated in the letter "about the lack of effectiveness of the County's Riparian Corridor Protection Ordinance." We also believe that with regard to some aspects of this Ordinance, it is not necessarily the performance standards in the code which must be overhauled but application and administration of this Ordinance with regard to upscaling of existing development, and with regard to unauthorized riparian development. With regard to the latter, we share the Commission's conclusion that "enforcement actions in cases of unauthorized riparian development are woefully inadequate."

In addition, we believe that as part of this effort an informational brochure should be created that would be sent to all owners and occupants along riparian corridors outlining the importance of riparian area, and the owners' responsibilities with regard to them.

Should your Planning Department desire it, we are happy to support meeting with them to elaborate upon our concerns around this issue. Members of our Conservation Committee have decades of experience dealing with Riparian Ordinance administration before the County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

David Casterson,  
Executive Committee Chair  
Sierra Club Santa Cruz Group

Michael Guth,  
Conservation Chair