

find response letter

S.M.A.R.T.
P.O. Box 50
Santa Margarita, California 93453

April 18, 2000

Dear Senator Jack O'Connell:

In May, 1999, we received a letter from you supporting our efforts to preserve the Santa Margarita Ranch. For almost a year, Santa Margarita Area Residents Together (SMART) has worked to ensure that enforcement agencies and owner-developer Rob Rossi don't ignore the extensive environmental impacts associated with development of the Ranch.

We are turning to you at this time because we have reached an impasse with the California Department of Fish and Game. We have verbal confirmation of DFG violations on the Santa Margarita Ranch, but there is a strong resistance to enforcing the permitting requirements. **Please help us to identify what must be done to move this process forward expeditiously.**

The attached letters document the following chronology:

- July 21, 1999 Letter from DFG to Mr. Rossi stating conditions necessary for appropriate water rights permit and 1603 permit, subject to CEQA regulations.
- October 14, 1999 Letter from DFG to Mr. Rossi enclosing a notification package to begin process of obtaining a 1603 permit and accomplishing CEQA compliance.
- February 9, 2000 Water Rights Complaint against the Santa Margarita vineyard project by California Department of Fish and Game.

On March 14, 2000, aerial photographs were taken of the Santa Margarita Ranch and copies were sent to Patricia Anderson at the Monterey office of the California Department of Fish and Game. In phone conversations during the past month, Ms. Anderson and her supervisor, Pat Coulston, have stated that the photographs show DFG code violations and that the vineyard project requires a 1603 permit. However, no enforcement action has occurred.

Although Mr. Rossi and the Robert Mondavi Company have been informed that there should be no work initiated until a permit is issued, the vineyard project is underway now.

SMART is requesting your immediate assistance.

Respectfully,

John Beccia, President, SMART