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ABANDONED VEHICLE ABATEMENT AUTHORITY

May 18, 1992

Ms. Claudia E. Smith
Regional Counsel
California Rural Legal Assistance
216 South Tremont Street
Oceanside, CA 92049

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding our farmworker housing fee waiver program. I certainly share your interest in facilitating the provision of housing for homeless farmworkers.

Given the County's current financial situation, I hope you understand that we must be assured that money expended on any program is effective. Current indications are that our Farmworker Housing Fee Waiver program has not been as effective in addressing the homelessness of farmworkers as we had originally hoped.

You commented on the fact that 43 percent of the applications are the result of code enforcement actions. Our staff has informed me that while a few of these enforcement actions involve substandard units, many are simply trailers that exist illegally housing relatives or friends. In these cases, it appears the applicant is merely trying to legalize an existing situation; agriculture is virtually non-existent on the property, and there is no intent to house a farmworker.

With regard to the approximately 20 percent of the applications which are inappropriate and represent either an attempt to circumvent the underlying density regulations or to take advantage of a "free" program, I appreciate your suggestion to use the expertise of the Agricultural Commissioner to pre-screen the applications. In fact, the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) has been investigating methods by which the Fee Waiver program could be improved and one of the options which will be proposed will be to utilize existing procedures of the Agricultural Commissioner to eliminate the non-agriculturally related applications.

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DPLU plans to return to the Board on June 2, 1992 with recommendations which the Board hopes will eliminate nearly all of the inappropriate applications. If funding is available, and if approved by the Board, the proposed modified program should be less susceptible to abuse. It remains to be seen whether or not these proposed alterations in the program will result in the addition of housing units for homeless farmworkers. If the investment made truly provides housing for this group, then this program is, most definitely, worthwhile.

If you have further questions on the Farmworker Housing Fee Waiver program, please contact Ms. Marina Brand of the Department of Planning and Land Use (694-3707) or Ms. Colleen Carnevale of my staff (531-5862). If there are other matters in which I may provide assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Leon L. Williams

Leon L. Williams
Supervisor, Fourth District

LLW:cmc