

1 **NAPA COUNTY PLANNING, BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**
2 **DEPARTMENT**

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5 **IN RE: WALT RANCH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PUBLIC**
6 **HEARING**

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10 **TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED PROCEEDINGS**
11 MEETING OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

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14 **PRESENT:**

15 DAVID MORRISON, Director, Presiding
16 LAURA ANDERSON, County Counsel
17 MELISSA FROST, Administrative Secretary
18 BRIAN BORDONA, Supervising Planner
19 KELLI CAHILL, Senior Planner

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24 Transcribed by: Kathryn Johnson

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1 DIRECTOR DAVID MORRISON: It looks like we're going to have
2 a lengthy meeting, so let's go ahead and get started please.
3 Could we have quiet please? Thank you.

4 I'm going to have a few opening remarks, then we'll get
5 started. Good afternoon, and thank you for coming to the Public
6 Hearing concerning the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
7 Walt Ranch Erosion Control Project. My name is David Morrison,
8 I'm the Director for the Napa County Department of Planning,
9 Building, and Environmental Services.

10 I'll be presiding over this hearing. With me today are
11 Laura Anderson, Deputy County Counsel; Melissa Frost,
12 Administrative Secretary; Brian Bordona, the Supervising
13 Planner; and Kelli Cahill, the Senior Planner. Representatives
14 from Analytical Environmental Services, the firm that prepared
15 the EIR are also in attendance this afternoon.

16 The format for the hearing will be as follows: Staff will
17 provide a brief overview of the proposed project, and the
18 analysis in the EIR, and then public testimony will be accepted.
19 The following ground rules will be applied today. All public
20 testimony will be limited to three minutes. Testimony is being
21 recorded and will be transcribed for preparation of the Final
22 EIR. So far, I have 54 comment cards. If you haven't filled one
23 out and want to speak, we ask that you do so. If everybody has
24 three minutes, testimony will take approximately three hours.

25 We will take periodic breaks, and stay as long as needed to
26 get everybody's comments on the record this afternoon. Please
27 keep your remarks to three minutes out of respect for the other
28 people who wish to speak so that everyone can be heard today. If

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1 you have more extensive comments that take longer than three
2 minutes, please provide them in writing. All comments, both
3 written, and verbal, will be responded to as a part of the Final
4 EIR. Written and verbal comments will be considered equally. One
5 does not have more weight or importance than the other.

6 We appreciate it if you state your name and address when
7 you speak so that we can identify the comments in the EIR. And
8 ask that you please direct your comments to me, and not to the
9 applicant, Staff, or members of the audience. Out of respect for
10 others, please refrain from clapping, cheering, or booing. If we
11 do that for 30 seconds after each speaker, we are not going to
12 get out of here for much longer than three hours. And some
13 people have--may not be able to sit for that long period of
14 time. Other people may have appointments, or may actually get
15 hungry and want dinner. So, out of respect so that everybody can
16 be heard tonight, please keep your remarks short, and please no
17 comment--or no verbal clapping or cheering in between.

18 This is a hearing, this is not a debate. Please keep your
19 testimony focused on the adequacy of the Draft EIR. Comments
20 regarding support or opposition to the project will not be
21 addressed in the EIR. There will be a second public hearing,
22 likely held early next year, when the decision will be reached
23 on the project. Your thoughts about whether the project should
24 be approved or denied will be the subject of that hearing. They
25 are not the subject of this hearing.

26 Please avoid repetitious comments. If other people have
27 already made the same points, or presented information you were
28 going to mention, then we'd prefer that you just acknowledge

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1 that you agree with the other speakers, rather than reiterate
2 them. But, if you feel you must, please feel free to do so.

3 I understand that there are strong feelings regarding this
4 project; however, I ask that you respect the public hearing
5 process, and keep all remarks civil. If anyone is disorderly, I
6 will ask to have them removed from the public hearing room. I
7 also ask that everybody who wishes to testify fill out a
8 speakers card. It's not required, but it allows for a more
9 orderly hearing. I'll be calling up people in groups of three to
10 speak, so that we don't have a mad dash to the podium, so
11 everybody can get up there first, say their peace, and go home.

12 Someone is going to be at the end of three hours of
13 hearing, and so we're going to do it in groups of three so that
14 we don't have a long line, and you're not required to stand in
15 line for three hours waiting to speak. Remember that in order
16 for your comments to be included in the Final EIR, they must be
17 submitted by Friday, November 21, that's a week from Friday, at
18 4:00 p.m.

19 Finally, the purpose of this meeting is to give Staff and
20 consultants a chance to hear what each of you has to say this
21 afternoon. Success depends on your patience and consideration,
22 both of which are greatly appreciated. So, if you're ready,
23 let's begin. I'm going to ask Kelli to give us a brief overview,
24 and then we'll get going on the public testimony. Thank you.

25 KELLI CAHILL: Good afternoon. Kelli Cahill, with Staff. I
26 am the Project Planner, and your primary contact for the
27 project.

28 The Walt Ranch Project is a 356-acre vineyard project, 507

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1 gross acres, of approximately 2,300-acre parcel, or holding.
2 This includes the removal of vegetation, earth moving, and
3 grading activity, as well as some blasting, ripping, rock
4 removal, and associated soil cultivation for the erosion control
5 plan features, and ultimate vineyard planting and harvesting. It
6 includes temporary and permanent erosion control measures, of
7 which are outlined in the EIR.

8 The scope of the EIR was primarily air quality, and
9 greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources, cultural
10 resources, geology and soils, hazardous materials, hydrology and
11 water quality, noise, transportation and traffic, as well as an
12 alternatives and cumulative analysis impact section. All other
13 sections were eliminated during the NOP process, or Notice of
14 Preparation, where an initial study was prepared for the
15 project.

16 I'll have Jeff queue up a couple slides just to illustrate
17 where the project is located. This first one is a--as you can
18 see--sorry, everyone turn around. So, the project is outlined in
19 red there, just south of Berryessa. The next slide is a closer
20 view with, as you can see in the lower corner, Circle Oaks. And
21 the next slide, and we'll just keep this one up for awhile, this
22 is the holding with the proposed project. And if you're curious,
23 the areas identified in the bright pink, or fuchsia, are
24 existing vineyard, those were planted on slopes less than five
25 percent, not requiring an erosion control plan.

26 And I think we can begin. I will note that I've reserved
27 some seats over here for everyone that wants to--for those
28 people queuing up to speak, so go ahead and use those seats,

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1 just remove the paper. And I will turn it over to David.

2 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you, Kelli. Okay, so, we will
3 give the applicant the first chance to speak, Mr. Hall, followed
4 by Karin Troedsson, and Jed Welsh.

5 CRAIG HALL: Good afternoon, my name is Craig Hall. My
6 wife, Kathryn and I, and our family, are the owners of Walt
7 Ranch. We are sorry that this vineyard has caused concerns to
8 so--to anyone. We are open to modifying the project in ways that
9 will improve it, or eliminate, or hopefully minimize concerns,
10 as long as we can figure out reasonable ways of doing so.

11 By way of very brief background, as Kelli stated, it is a
12 2,300-acre property. It does also have 35 legal parcels. It's
13 part of the Ag Preserve. We're talking about a vineyard on 12
14 percent of the property.

15 The Environmental Impact Report was started eight years
16 ago. It was slowed down in the beginning because of the Napa
17 Valley General Plan, which was completed in 2008. And this
18 project has been carefully designed to meet all of the
19 requirements of the Napa Valley General Plan, as well as the Ag
20 Preserve.

21 We're looking forward to everyone's comments, and
22 notwithstanding the fact that we believe it complies properly
23 with all of the General Plan and Ag Preserve, we are, again,
24 open to seeing if there are some ways to improve it. Thank you,
25 very much.

26 KARIN TROEDSSON: My name is Karin Troedsson, I'm the Staff
27 Attorney for the Land Trust of Napa County. The Land Trust of
28 Napa County is a non-profit community organization that works

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1 with willing landowners to permanently protect their property in
2 Napa County. We are not an advocacy organization, and we do not
3 endorse or oppose development projects. Our Board has
4 specifically passed a policy that prohibits any advocacy on
5 projects with pending entitlements. I'm here today to let
6 everyone know that the Land Trust of Napa County does not have a
7 position on Walt Ranch. I'd also like to say that no one else in
8 this room here today is authorized to use our name in their
9 comments. If anyone has any questions about our organization, or
10 our efforts to protect the character of Napa County, please feel
11 free to contact me directly. My direct line is 261-6326. Thank
12 you.

13 JED WELSH: I'm Jed Welsh. I'm the President of the Board
14 of Directors of the Circle Oaks County Water District. And I'm
15 going to turn my time over to our next speaker, Ron Tamarisk,
16 who's another Director of the--another Director of the County
17 Water District, and he will read our prepared statement.

18 DIRECTOR MORRISON: As long as he can keep it within three
19 minutes, we're not going--I don't want to allow for...

20 MR. WELSH: He's the fourth speaker too.

21 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Pardon?

22 MR. WELSH: He's also the next speaker.

23 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I understand, as long as he can keep it
24 to three minutes.

25 RON TAMARISK: Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Ron
26 Tamarisk, I live on 11 Rockrose Court in Circle Oaks. And I am,
27 as Jed indicated, a Director of the Circle Oaks County Water
28 District. So, I speak on behalf of the entire Board of

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1 Directors.

2 Our water district is the sole water supplier for
3 approximately 500 people in the community of Circle Oaks. We
4 have a responsibility, and legal obligation to the residents who
5 have depended upon this water source for 50 years. Our residents
6 and families rely exclusively upon one vertical well, and one
7 spring water source for drinking water and fire suppression.
8 Contrary to what has been said, there was no reasonable attempt
9 to contact us regarding the impacts of the project on our
10 community. Consequently our concerns were not registered during
11 the drafting of the project studies.

12 The water district has two employees, an answering machine,
13 an email address, a website, and a physical office building
14 within 50 yards of the main entrance to Walt Ranch. The Draft
15 EIR is inadequate, and incomplete, and fails to disclose the
16 type and degree of water impacts on the project's neighboring
17 water users.

18 The following represents some of our concerns. These
19 concerns will be detailed in our written comments on the DEIR.
20 Our first concern is water supply, and the cumulative impact of
21 more and more vineyards. In Section 4.6 of the DEIR we find the
22 one and only mention of the Circle Oaks Water District as
23 follows: "COCWD may also have two wells and a spring water
24 source located along the southern Walt Ranch property boundary."
25 In Appendix D, the pumping study did not include any assessment
26 of the impact or recovery rates on our nearby wells, including
27 one only 2,000 feet from their proposed well number four.

28 Our second major concern is groundwater quality. The impact

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1 of all four of their wells, as well as the four Circle S Ranch
2 wells, drawing at peak usage for an extended period in the
3 summer, is not properly assessed. With 300 acres of new
4 vineyards, what is the potential for an increase in
5 particulates, chemicals, and pesticides into the aquifer and
6 existing offsite wells? If the groundwater were drawn down,
7 would boron, or other contaminants, increase to unacceptable
8 levels? Unanswered.

9 Finally, what effect will this project have on our
10 infrastructure? Our tanks are located on steep slopes below
11 proposed oak woodland clear cuts. Our water delivery and sewage
12 pipes underlie Circle Oaks Drive. These face potential
13 disruption from prolonged traffic by heavy vehicles, and by land
14 slippage exacerbated by the massive vegetation changes proposed
15 by this project. Without a safe and reliable water supply, all
16 communities are doomed.

17 We urge the Planning Department to consider our comments on
18 the deficiency of the Walt Ranch DEIR with the utmost attention.
19 We don't want yet another Napa County community with inadequate
20 or absent water. Thank you.

21 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Greg Gale, Dan Mufson, and Christy
22 Vough, please.

23 GREG GALE: [Morrison.] Is this my clicker?

24 [JEFF TANGEN]: It's just going to...

25 MR. GALE: Can I have you click for me?

26 MR. TANGEN: Yes.

27 MR. GALE: Okay, great.

28 MR. TANGEN: Which file is yours?

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1 MR. GALE: It should be Walt Ranch dash G-G-a-l-e. Greg
2 Gale. I'm going to wait until you bring it up and get settled.

3 MR. TANGEN: Is that it?

4 MR. GALE: That's it. I'm good to go?

5 MR. TANGEN: Yes sir.

6 MR. GALE: My name is Greg Gale, I reside at 3380 Atlas
7 Peak Road, and have for 20 years now. I'm here to make comments,
8 but actually my comments are assertions. I have two assertions.

9 My first assertion is that the Walt Ranch DEIR is a
10 fraudulent document. That's my first. My second is that it's
11 woven into the fabric of another EIR that was approved by the
12 County, that's contiguous to it, the Circle S Ranch. That is
13 also fraudulent because it's built on the same false data that
14 this current DEIR is.

15 So what we have here, and what I'm saying with these two
16 boundary lines you see here, the Walt Ranch and the Circle S
17 Ranch. Next slide. Same with all the--with the parcel lines in
18 place. And I'm going to show you where I believe the fraudulent
19 play is in this--in this mix.

20 If you can go to the next slide. There we have the two
21 roads on the right. The black line is actually the Route 121.
22 Caltrans repairs that road, maintains that road. On the left is
23 the Atlas Peak Road, I actually don't know who maintains that,
24 in my 20 years here I've seen two people, two residents at two
25 separate times filling foxholes with their own macadam, so we
26 take care of ourselves, more or less.

27 My issue, if you can go to the next slide, my issue is the
28 blue circle down at the bottom. And now if we could go beyond

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1 that slide, sir, to the next one, you see that little blue
2 trapezoidal, that's my property, that's where I live. Right
3 below the two contiguous properties, green being Circle S, and
4 red being the Walt Ranch.

5 I've lived there, as I've said, for 20 years. Right above
6 me, if we can go to the next slide, is old man Webster, Donald
7 Webster's property. He moved off the hill when he got too old.
8 In 2006 that property was bought by, next slide, it was bought
9 by Hall Michigan Investors, LLC, out of Frisco, Texas. And they
10 refi-ed again, I believe, in 2008.

11 If we can go to the next slide. So, that slide gave the
12 Walt Ranch access to their properties from both Atlas Peak, and
13 from Route 121. But it was not declared in the EIR. It's not
14 there. That parcel's not there. They have an easement with the
15 Circle S Ranch. They've noted that even in the past two weeks at
16 their Meritage--if you go to the next slide. This is from a 2009
17 document. If you read the yellow highlight, access for the
18 project is at 3438 Atlas Peak Road, and at two points, that are
19 not really defined, along Highway 121.

20 If we can go to the next slide. That document, that data
21 was released at this meeting in January 22, 2009. Up in the
22 upper-left-hand corner you'll see Diane Dillon was there, Mark
23 Luce was there. Down below you'll see an alternate, Keith
24 Caldwell was there. That's all the people were there.

25 We can go one more slide, I'm almost done. There at the
26 bottom of that slide, you'll see Circle S saying, you know, our
27 project will be approved in 2009. Now we'll go--next slide.

28 On this slide here we're back to where both projects--why

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1 isn't that parcel, why isn't that parcel in the EIR? It has
2 access. They're going to plan the access to it. Why isn't the
3 easement in the EIR, and further, where's the traffic count?

4 So I'm maintaining the traffic and the noise issues in the
5 EIR are bogus. They have to be reworked. So, what I'm seeking on
6 that one, is revision. On the Circle S that was approved back
7 in, I believe, the Hilary Gitelman era, and then when that was
8 approved in 2011, it used the same false data.

9 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay.

10 MR. GALE: If we have to take into account all the roads,
11 all the 168 one-way trips per day, Atlas Peak Road simply can't
12 handle it. What we would like...

13 DIRECTOR MORRISON: ...Thank you for your comments, Mr.
14 Gale.

15 MR. GALE: I'd like a rescission on the Circle S property.
16 Revision, and rescission. Thank you very much.

17 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Mr. Mufson.

18 DAN MUFSON: Ready? My name is Dan Mufson. I live at 1877
19 Atlas Peak Road. I'm part of the Atlas Peak neighbors that live
20 on or around Atlas Peak. Next please.

21 Atlas Peak is a beautiful place. It has rugged beauty, and
22 we are aware of nature and we know we have to tread softly. We
23 love being close to the earth, and we have done so for 150
24 years. Next please. The only thing I like about this report is
25 the beautiful oak forest on the cover. The project is in the Ag
26 Watershed. But that being said, grapes are not the base--best
27 use of this land. Look at how much work is going to be required
28 to make this site conform to grape growing. Next please.

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1 The sight and scope of this project is inappropriate. The
2 report lists numerous environmentally significant impacts which
3 require mitigation. Next please.

4 It threatens the Milliken and MST area. The MST is a
5 groundwater-deficient area created by the overdevelopment to
6 vineyards. And there are now huge public costs to bring in
7 recycled water to this region. Since the Walt Ranch will use at
8 least 69 million annually, there's also a concern about soil and
9 chemicals getting into the City of Napa water supply. Next
10 please.

11 There's also the potential threat of Lake Berryessa due to
12 runoff of chemicals and sediment from this project. Next please.

13 Maps are good, but we need to take a look at what's an
14 aerial view. You can see the Walt Ranch and the Milliken Creek.
15 There is Milliken Reservoir, all very close on Atlas Peak. Next
16 slide. It backs up a little bit and you--whoops, and we can see
17 the Circle Oaks community on this side of the bridge. Next
18 please.

19 This is a picture of the Walt Ranch, and Circle Oaks
20 community looking west, and you can see that the Circle Oaks
21 community is nestled into the hills there. Next please.

22 What does destruction of woodlands look like? If you take a
23 look at this picture taken across the Atlas Peak, you can see
24 that this vineyard took out the oak lands and that's what it
25 looks like when you take off trees from the top. The Walt Ranch
26 is in here. Down below is the Mead Ranch. The Mead Ranch has
27 planted their grapes on flat land, and all of the oak forest
28 that surrounds them has been given to the land trust. Next

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1 please.

2 The Circle Oaks Water District tanks sit on the hillside
3 just underneath the peak. And the Walt Ranch property line runs
4 right across here behind those tanks. So, there's great concern
5 about taking water out of that hill, and there's great concern
6 about the possible pesticides coming down the hill. Next please.

7 The Walt Ranch proposes to have an entrance coming up
8 Circle Oaks Drive. Circle Oaks Drive does not have sidewalks.
9 Children walk there to school. Next please.

10 Why don't they use the entrance on Highway 121, or do they
11 plan to really do it on Atlas Peak Road. Next please.

12 At a recent meeting, we found out that there's a
13 possibility of 35 landfills, or recreational vehicle parks. Next
14 please.

15 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Are you about ready to wrap up Mr.
16 Mufson?

17 MR. MUFSON: Okay.

18 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you.

19 MR. MUFSON: Two more. So, we're concerned about the
20 cumulative impact. Next please. Whether we're going to have to
21 truck water up the hill. Next.

22 Are we going to have habitat destruction? And lastly, next
23 slide.

24 It's a threat to our home and our land security. Next
25 slide.

26 And what is the future of biota on Atlas Peak?

27 CHRISTY VOUGH: So mine is set for automatic timer if you
28 could just wait before you start mine.

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1 Hello, my name is Christy Vough, and I'm a resident of
2 Circle Oaks, 163 Ridgecrest Drive, and a science teacher at
3 American Canyon high school. I'm here to address the concern of
4 adequate water supply, and hope to enlighten people with some
5 facts, including scientific evidence that will show that this
6 concern is justifiable.

7 So in reference to the Section 4.6, I don't want to read it
8 and run out of time, but the reference Circle Oaks has a few
9 wells. It is difficult to understand how a groundwater study,
10 one purpose of which is to determine potential negative effects
11 on the groundwater supply in neighboring wells could draw any
12 accurate conclusions when it fails to take into consideration
13 the effects of current community, and makes no mention of the
14 fact that Circle Oaks is a planned community that will have
15 approximately 120 or more homes when full build out is reached.
16 Estimates of water use set for full build out should be included
17 in the environmental impact report. It is a known fact that more
18 homes are coming to the community. The Hall Brambletree
19 Corporation cannot claim ignorance in this fact, nor should they
20 be allowed to not consider this in the Environmental Impact
21 Report.

22 So evidence to support my concern for the adequacy of
23 groundwater. California is currently in severe drought. Napa has
24 been declared an extreme drought. The Governor has called for a
25 20-percent reduction of water usage by all residents of the
26 state. I'm not quite sure how an estimated 69-million gallons
27 per year can fall in that 20-percent reduction. There's new
28 legislation that will change how groundwater is to be monitored.

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1 It's interesting that after a prolonged eight years of study
2 there seems to be a rush to push it through now that those
3 regulations are going to be going into effect.

4 The City of St. Helena would not fill the High School
5 swimming pool, approximately 75,000 gallons in their pool,
6 because of concern of drought. Yet, a project that is estimated
7 to use 69 million gallons annually is being considered. Climate
8 change is a fact. Glaciers worldwide are shrinking. The negative
9 impact of this is that as glaciers melt, dark rock is exposed,
10 it absorbs heat, the glaciers melt at a rapid rate. So, climate
11 change is a fact. The warmer temperatures and heat wave that
12 California and the southwest are experiencing is causing an
13 increase in evaporation rate. So, measuring rainfall in the
14 backyard is no longer accurate because of the increased
15 evaporation rate. It needs to take more rainfall to recover from
16 our drought.

17 When this Board considers the Walt Ranch project, please do
18 not forgot the drought conditions and the fact that climate
19 change is happening. Without dependable water supply, these
20 neighbors and Circle Oaks property owners, including those whose
21 property is not yet developed, will suffer. Continued
22 availability waters is a must--availability water. Okay.

23 So, these are just some images to verify the evidence that
24 there is concern for adequate water supply.

25 So it's the Sierra snow pack, which is non-existent. Lake
26 Folsom. Or Folsom Lake. Thank you.

27 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you. Next three speakers. Gordon
28 Evans, Garret E. Brown, and Lindy--I'm sorry, Cindy Heitzman.

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1 GORDON EVANS: Good afternoon, my name is Gordon Evans. I'm
2 a resident of Atlas Peak Road, and I thank Mr. Morrison for this
3 opportunity to speak, which might not have happened if the Halls
4 hadn't chosen to grade slopes greater than five percent, or the
5 Halls hadn't chosen to grade slopes higher than five percent on
6 the Walt Ranch property.

7 My main concern is not so much with the existing vineyards
8 as proposed, but that they might be used as--in whatever form
9 used as window dressing, or as my wife puts it, expensive
10 landscaping for the eventual development of the 35 parcels.
11 Indeed, the Halls have on many occasions expressed their
12 surprise that this hasn't been more of a point of contention in
13 people who are concerned about the project.

14 I'm not going to get into all the details because there are
15 people here who are far more learned than I about the science
16 involved. But I will say that while the Halls may have complied
17 with the EIR requirements in the past, this DEIR needs to be
18 thoroughly reviewed utilizing current information, not the dated
19 data that they currently have, or that existed, but was not
20 included. A few more acres of high quality grapes on
21 questionable ground, simply aren't worth the want^{on} destruction
22 of heretofore pristine and irreplaceable woodlands. Thank you.

23 GARRET E. BROWN: Thank you for the opportunity. My name is
24 Garret Brown. I live at 4016 Atlas Peak Road. I live on a 160-
25 acre ranch, which is bordered on the east by Circle Oaks, and
26 bordered on the south by Circle S.

27 Forty years ago I drilled a fairly deep well, set the pump
28 at 300 feet--oh I'm sorry. I set the pump at 300 feet. It

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1 produced originally about 25 gallons a minute. Over the years
2 the well dropped down gradually until five years ago. It was
3 making three gallons a minute. So I drilled another well at a
4 different location, fairly deep, set the pump at 375 feet. It
5 originally produced 35 gallons a minute. It started dropping
6 down gradually, until today, it produces eight gallons a minute.
7 So, you see my concern.

8 Forty years ago Silverado golf course had the need for
9 deeper, and more wells; which they did. As a result, my son on
10 the hillside near there, his well went dry; it's been dry ever
11 since. So, I'm so concerned about people taking excess water
12 below me.

13 My other concern here with this proposal is the reservoirs.
14 I have a two--about two-and-a-half-acre reservoir on my ranch
15 that was there when I moved there 44 years ago. It's fed by
16 runoff from rainwater. This year because of low water I didn't
17 use any water out of the reservoir. And to my surprise, and
18 almost a shock, it had lowered six feet from evaporation.

19 So, in my humble opinion, the concept of open reservoirs
20 for storage to store well water, it seems like it's a terrible
21 waste of groundwater in the evaporation alone. And I'd just
22 appreciate your consideration for what I say.

23 CINDY HEITZMAN: My name is Cindy Heitzman. I live at 23
24 Rockrose Court, Circle Oaks. I've lived there for the past 29
25 years. First, I would like to thank Mr. Morrison for holding
26 this forum today to hear from all sides on this issue. It is
27 very important to us.

28 In an October 18 letter to the editor in the Napa Register,

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1 Mr. Hall stated that the land use rights for this property
2 include the right to build 35 wineries, 35 recreational vehicle
3 parks, 35 campgrounds, 35 hunting lodges, and other
4 developments. End quote.

5 I am concerned that we are not seeing this project in its
6 entirety, and that the project is being segmented. The danger of
7 segmentation is that it chops projects into smaller bits, which
8 standing alone may not present the full range and intensity of
9 the adverse impacts resulting from this entire project. Mr. Hall
10 stated in the aforementioned Napa Register article that they are
11 [in there and--and in their] informational forum, quote, We have
12 been considering what additional development rights to maintain.

13 The Draft Environmental Impact Report should analyze how
14 the project will foster growth, what the growth-inducing impacts
15 are of this project. By putting vineyards on 34 parcels,
16 providing water and access to all parcels, the infrastructure
17 for growth and the future development is in place. As the CEQA
18 guidelines state, quote, environmental problems should be
19 considered at a point in the planning process when genuine
20 flexibility remains. Court decisions have, in fact, held that
21 construction of such infrastructure cannot be considered in
22 isolation from the development it portends. Therefore, the Draft
23 Environmental Impact Report should include present, and
24 reasonably anticipated future projects that are likely to
25 produce related, or cumulative impacts. To not do this would
26 undermine one of the core goals of CEQA. Though the land may be
27 zoned Ag Watershed, the notion that the land can be exploited
28 for agriculture makes us no different than those who would

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1 deforest the rainforest for cattle, or for palm oil. This is a
2 time for change. Thank you.

3 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay, the next three speakers will be
4 Tim Mulligan, Gary Margadant, and Bill Fetzer.

5 TIM MULLIGAN: Thank you, again, Mr. Morrison. My name's
6 Tim Mulligan, I'm a biologist. I currently teach biology classes
7 at Napa Valley College. I've been in the Napa Valley for 45
8 years. I live at 18 Circle Oaks--18 Juniper in Circle Oaks--
9 homestead area. I have a very direct interest in this project,
10 obviously. Plots 68A, and 68B are probably within 150 feet of my
11 house. So, I would see all of the possible vineyard project
12 things going on, firsthand. It scares me a little.

13 As much as I'm interested in my own situation, I'm more
14 interested in the wildlife. I've watched the Napa Valley in
15 roughly 45 years go completely to grapes, up the hillsides, on
16 to the mountaintops, all of the well-known valleys, Gordon
17 Valley, Pope Valley, Chiles Valley, Wooden Valley, and I've
18 asked the question many times of many different people, what
19 about the wildlife. The answer, as you can imagine, is always
20 the same. Don't worry, they'll go somewhere else.

21 Walt Ranch is that somewhere else. This is where the
22 wildlife have holed up today. South of Walt Ranch, it's already
23 in grapes. North of Walt Ranch, the biome changes, the
24 microenvironment changes, there's not nearly as much diversity.
25 On the Walt Ranch there's the spotted owl, which is an
26 endangered species. There's two or three others up there. The
27 pygmy owl is not endangered, but protected. The pileated
28 woodpecker, the pygmy owl, as I mentioned before, the spotted

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1 towhee. It says in the EIR 4.2-14 that we're going to make some
2 efforts to mitigate things like blasting, and the effects it
3 will have on wildlife.

4 Bats were mentioned specifically. I doubt there's anyone in
5 this room that thinks that blasting is going to be in any way
6 mitigated for an animal that echolocates. I can't believe that
7 particular part.

8 But, anyway, there's a tremendous, tremendous number of
9 mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, clear down to the insects
10 and the abiotic part of the biome that exists there. The
11 proposal of building a labyrinth of fences will force the
12 animals to run through a maze constantly. 4.2, 5, and 6 says
13 they're going to try to mitigate this. I don't know how you
14 mitigate allowing wildlife to go through areas where they've
15 been through for 100 years, way more than that.

16 There are probably, I won't say too much more, I think the
17 28,000--the removal of 28,000 trees speaks for itself. It says
18 they might even replant two for one. I think as most of you
19 realize, they could plant 56,000 seedlings up there and 50,000
20 of them would die. Because if they're not planted where nature
21 planted them, then they're not going to grow. There's no water.
22 And I don't think we can afford to send drip lines out to all of
23 them too. So, thank you very much, I appreciate it. I will get
24 out of here.

25 Mr. Hall's website says he and his wife are stewards of the
26 Napa Valley. Mr. Morrison, you're also a steward of the Napa
27 Valley. And please, please, I know owners have rights, but
28 stewards have responsibilities. Thank you.

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1 GARY MARGADANT: Good afternoon, Director Morrison. I would
2 really want to thank you for holding this event. My name is Gary
3 Margadant. I'm the president of the Mt. Veeder Stewardship
4 Council, and I live at 4042 Mount Veeder Road. The Stewardship
5 Council has several comments about this project. And the first
6 one is is that we are--we don't understand how such a large
7 project of this size that removes so many trees, and uses so
8 much water, can actually be mitigated to less than significant
9 impact. We just don't understand how that is going to actually
10 play out, because it uses so much of the surrounding resources
11 in that area.

12 We also don't understand about the water analysis at this,
13 because there is not much about drought. In other words, you
14 know, we have water history of rain and recharge in the area,
15 but we don't have--this really doesn't cover the drought much at
16 all.

17 This leads us to what we call a margin of error. In other
18 words, the rainfalls will vary, they will go up, they will go
19 down. This is a margin that could be, you know, 20, 30 percent.
20 And we don't see that this project and the water analysis
21 actually includes that to say, well, okay, and in a really good
22 year you're going to get this much recharge, in a really bad
23 year, you're going to get this much. And to have the actual
24 flows and the removal of water out of the ground to, let's say,
25 follow that margin of error.

26 The hydrologist--the hydrologist in this case, I'm familiar
27 with him. He did the Carneros Inn, which is--now has problems.
28 He's also done the Yountville Hill Winery, and he's doing the

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1 Walt Ranch here. I've--you know, we think that this hydrologist
2 has some questions--is questionable. And we don't really
3 understand how he does the water balance in this case. We don't
4 know how he did it down at the Carneros Inn, because they haul
5 so much water down there now. At least they haul about, oh, more
6 than 50 percent of their water they required for their resort.

7 And, this is where it comes to it at the end, what if
8 things go wrong up at Walt. If you give them everything that
9 they want, and they do it, which is up to you, what are you--
10 what is the County going to do if things go wrong, and if people
11 in Circle Oaks, or people adjacent like this landowner over
12 here, what is the County going to do, what is their Plan B? We'd
13 really, really like to see that. And thanks very much for your
14 time.

15 BILL FETZER: Yes, good morning. Thank you for letting us
16 speak. I'm just going to read some prepared notes. My name is
17 Bill Fetzer, my wife and I live at 41 Columbine Court in Circle
18 Oaks. We've lived there for about ten years. We're relative
19 newcomers compared to the folks here. But, we feel very
20 passionately about the right to have a say in this process, and
21 we're very appreciative of letting you speak--letting us all
22 speak.

23 I am a neighbor of the proposed Walt Ranch development. The
24 Walt Ranch Draft EIR states that over 500 acres of land will be
25 cleared of nearly 29,000 significant trees. So that out-of-the-
26 state corporate owners of this property may exercise their right
27 to farm. We see in the news, and on documentaries, stories about
28 the slash and burn techniques used in equatorial rainforest to

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1 clear land for agricultural purposes. Without exception, these
2 news stories and documentaries point out the damaging effects
3 this clearing of old growth trees has on the health of our
4 environment.

5 Science supports the position that this practice harms the
6 environment. The only cure is for time allowed for growth of
7 mature trees, a process requiring hundreds of years. In Napa
8 County, the Walt Ranch project proposes to clear nearly one
9 square mile of old growth, forested hill country for
10 agricultural purposes, a practice we decry in the Amazon and
11 other rainforests, we seem willing to consider in the beautiful
12 hills of Napa County.

13 What we see is harmful in other places, we are willing to
14 consider here. Why? Will the harmful effects not be the same?
15 Yes, they will be. And current science states that no planned
16 mitigation can compensate for this slash and burn technique. The
17 double standard is clear. We seem to be willing to sell our
18 birthright for more grapes. Shame on us if we do so.

19 On a personal note, all of us, I speak for many of you, I
20 don't even know most of you. We moved to Circle Oaks, we moved
21 to Atlas Peak because it's beautiful, because it's peaceful,
22 because we have our own space, because we have mature trees,
23 because we have wildlife. All that is imperiled by this project.
24 And I ask that everybody here keep their minds focused on that
25 process. We want to see something transparent. We want to see a
26 change that brings--that looks at this whole EIR and says, is
27 this realistic. Thank you very much.

28 DIRECTOR MORRISON: The next three speakers will be Berit

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1 Muh, Parry Murray, and William Murray.

2 BERIT MUH: Good afternoon. My name is Berit Muh, and for
3 19 years we've lived at 2075 Atlas Peak. So we're a few miles
4 from the project, and as a result didn't get any of the official
5 notifications, the DEIR. We found out from our neighbors. Our
6 well is 640 feet deep and it used to give us more than adequate,
7 large amounts of water.

8 In the past couple of years, between the drought and all
9 the wineries currently on Atlas Peak, our water has gotten
10 scarcer. Enough so that we have to truck in water at significant
11 expense several times a month despite very careful water use and
12 conservation measures. The water studies done that are included
13 in this DEIR were done several years before the drought and only
14 checked the impact on the immediately adjacent properties. We
15 would like to see additional studies that reflect the current
16 drought conditions, include a larger geographic area of Atlas
17 Peak to determine the environmental impact on neighbors like us
18 some miles away, but with wells fed by a number of the same
19 interrelated water sources. Thank you very much for hearing our
20 consideration.

21 PARRY MURRAY: Good afternoon, I'm Parry Murray, I'm at
22 3393 Atlas Peak Road. My parcel is just across from Greg Gales
23 and down from the two large, contiguous projects that he
24 referenced in his slides.

25 I do have specific questions regarding groundwater testing,
26 and so forth, that I'll submit in writing, but today I'd just
27 like to pose a more fundamental question or two here.

28 We're at a crossroad in Napa's history, a place we've been

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1 before, such as when the Ag Preserve was established to protect
2 ag land and our Napa way of life from rampant overdevelopment.
3 Today we're facing rampant overdevelopment again, but from
4 within the ag community itself. And it now threatens not only
5 our way of life, but the very watersheds that nurture it. I
6 stand before, and with, you in calling for courage and vision at
7 this junction.

8 My first question is, while California and many other
9 regions around the country and the world are under such severe
10 drought conditions, why would we consider one more such project
11 when cumulative data isn't even in yet from some of these other
12 currently permitted, large-scale projects? And since it's
13 claimed in the EIR that operations would cease if water tables
14 drop, how would you propose to, first of all, determine exactly
15 how much each and every one of these projects is contributing to
16 the problem, and secondly, actually enforce a shutdown. Also, is
17 there a financial plan in place to truck water in for those of
18 us when our wells run dry?

19 I'm here to say today that I really think as a county
20 concerning these large-scale vineyard projects and other
21 overdevelopment, we just need to slow down.

22 As far as the Atlas Peak aquifer and the Milliken watershed
23 is concerned, does it make one iota of sense to continue
24 approving new, expansive projects in that same aquifer? Looming
25 ahead is a dark cloud of unknowns. Several articulate letters
26 have addressed the shortage of groundwater data, the shortage of
27 actual water, as you've heard today, and the threat to a quiet
28 life chosen, and now palpably threatened.

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1 Legitimate concern should not be pushed aside by bulldozer
2 blades, along with deer, every oak tree, Manzanita bush, and
3 snapping twig in the way. Given that the County itself has
4 already called for a revision of its own groundwater ordinance,
5 a confession, in essence, that there is inadequate data, why on
6 earth would we approve new projects until that ordinance has at
7 least been revised? How can we plan based on unknowns?

8 I join all of those who are here today, as well as
9 throughout the county for an immediate moratorium on large-scale
10 vineyard development until both County groundwater and winery
11 ordinances have been revised and completed. We simply need to
12 take a breather while we collectively work to define, and put
13 into place limits on what we allow to happen, or not, in our
14 watersheds.

15 Lest we forget, in terms of Atlas Peak and the Milliken
16 watershed, we're now contemplating contaminating our own
17 drinking water. Have we really come to that? A moratorium would
18 provide time to more carefully and conscientiously plan our
19 future in this corner of the world we share. Thank you very
20 much.

21 WILLIAM MURRAY: Good afternoon, Mr. Morrison. My name is
22 William Murray. I reside at 1055 Hedgeside Avenue. And I'd like
23 to talk a little bit about the history of water in our area.

24 Now, my home's location is not far from the hills of Atlas
25 Peak area, and within the Milliken Creek diminishing aquifer.
26 It's served directly by the watershed, which the Walt Ranch
27 project is contemplated. When our home well was developed in
28 1943, the water level rose to the top of the well's casing.

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1 There were neighbors whose wells were artesian, as are many
2 artesian springs and wells on the hills nearby. Those artesian
3 wells, as far as I know, are all gone. I don't know of any
4 artesian springs in the hills anymore.

5 Sometime around--here's another example. Sometime around
6 1900, a well was dug at what is now the Silverado Springs
7 development at the corner of Atlas Peak and Monticello Roads.
8 When they dug this well it became artesian with great force.
9 This artesian well was so powerful that it cut a deep-water
10 course to Milliken Creek, turning Milliken Creek reddish brown
11 with sediment as it churned the soil in the path until its
12 source could be capped many days later.

13 Those plentiful water days are gone. I know of no artesian
14 wells in the area. Our own well water level has dropped
15 significantly over the years. Traditionally, the wells in our
16 area are shallow wells, reflecting our once plentiful aquifer.
17 Large-scale developments, such as the Walt Ranch project, are
18 pushing us to the tipping point in our water resources. It's
19 time for a moratorium on large-scale developments which
20 contribute to our already diminishing water resources. Thank you
21 for your time, Mr. Morrison.

22 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I'd like to commend everybody. We've
23 had 16 speakers, for about 48 minutes, and we've gone about 45
24 minutes in the hearing, so everything's going along very well. I
25 appreciate everybody's cooperation. Next three speakers, Carol
26 Kunze, Chris Malan, and Peter Krammer.

27 CAROL KUNZE: Um, do you have my slides? Yeah. Thanks. My
28 name is Carol Kunze, I'm speaking for the Napa Sierra Club.

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1 Conversion of woodlands and upland habitat to agricultural use
2 in Napa is happening at such an aggressive rate that we're
3 beginning to cannibalize the county, threatening resources
4 needed by neighbors and wildlife alike. Acres and acres of
5 upland habitat are being destroyed, and what habitat is left is
6 fragmented.

7 Our wildlife is being left with no place to go, and the
8 health of our watersheds will suffer as a result. This map is
9 from Napa County's baseline data report. It shows land in green
10 that had no development and could be used to protect wildlife.
11 Pink represents parcels with development. Unfortunately those
12 green areas, which could be used to protect wildlife, are being
13 developed. Next slide.

14 This is a blowup of the map showing Walt Ranch, previously
15 identified as land that could be used for protection of
16 wildlife. Wildlife habitat is being fragmented throughout
17 California by roads, conversion of wild lands to agriculture,
18 and deer fences. All three threats to wildlife habitat are
19 present in this project. Could you show the next slide?

20 This slide you've seen before. Habitat fragmentation is one
21 of the greatest threats to biodiversity, and thus to species
22 survival. The DEIR concludes that the cumulative impact on
23 habitat fragmentation as a result of the proposed project is
24 expected to be less than significant. Unfortunately, as you can
25 see, although there're going to be less than 300 acres converted
26 to vineyard, and less than a total of 500 acres--sorry, about
27 500 acres of total development, wildlife habitat over the entire
28 2,300 acres will be fragmented.

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1 As I said, the DEIR concludes that cumulative impact will
2 be less than significant, but this, quite frankly, is just not
3 believable on its face. Our written analysis, which will be
4 submitted by the 21st, will be--indicates that the DEIR is
5 inadequate in many respects. A number of known sensitive species
6 have not been included. There's been insufficient discussion of
7 edge impacts, and there has been inadequate discussion of the
8 impact of fragmentation for all possible species.

9 Walt Ranch is an area--is in an area designated for three
10 uses: agriculture, watershed, and open space. Given the
11 topography and the habitat of those three options, agriculture
12 is just not the proper choice. Thank you.

13 CHRIS MALAN: Hi. My name is Chris Malan. I'm the manager
14 of Living Rivers Council, and we've been in this discussion for
15 almost 20 years. So, I'm so happy to see so many people
16 realizing what this county is facing, with an industry out of
17 control, marching up the hillsides, and destroying the very
18 headwaters of our streams and our river. This is one third of
19 the documents in the EIR. The stack down at the County is really
20 like three times this. And you would think with the amount of
21 paper and the amount of time that the applicant and the County
22 did to produce this EIR, that we would get accurate information.
23 But we are not. We are not. And I'm so sad to say that the
24 applicant did not properly characterize the setting of this
25 project within the Napa River watershed, within the Milliken-
26 Sarco-Tulocay watershed.

27 This aquifer is going to be impacted by this project and
28 the applicant says it won't. This aquifer is in overdraft, and

1 the applicant says this project's not going to affect the
2 Milliken-Sarco-Tulocay aquifer. And we've had people here giving
3 historic information, testifying before the County what has
4 happened to their wells, and their springs, and their artesian
5 over the last 40 to 50 years. It promises to get worse.

6 So, the applicant did not say that Sarco and Tulocay creeks
7 are dry almost year round due to significant cumulative impacts
8 from agricultural and extraction of groundwater. The EIR doesn't
9 say anything about that. Those creeks are dead, and Milliken's
10 on its way. Okay, the Milliken aquifer and the Milliken
11 watershed is extremely unique. There are species there nowhere
12 else in the world. The applicant did not discuss that. The
13 applicant did not do proper protocols for Pallid bat, long-eared
14 Townsend bat, did not do proper protocols for California red-
15 legged frog, and Foothill yellow-legged frog. Severely lacking.

16 The applicant didn't talk about erosion coming off of the
17 project. They said, eh, you know, it's all going to stay on the
18 project. Wrong. Okay, it's going to go off the property, it's
19 going to into Milliken Creek where there is still some
20 incredible habitat for Steelhead. And yes, it's below the dam,
21 but guess what, that water spills over the dam. And all those
22 sediments go and fill in the habitats below. So, I'm sorry to
23 say, the EIR is lacking. Thank you.

24 PETER KRAMMER: Hello, I'm Peter Krammer. I live at 351
25 Circle Oaks Drive, about 200 feet from Walt Ranch's Block 37. I
26 moved to Circle Oaks, as did most of the community, because it
27 is quiet. How quiet is it? According to a sound study conducted
28 over the last two weeks, it is 33 decibels. It is not 59 as

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1 stated in Section 4.8 of the Draft EIR. Let me illustrate what
2 we're facing.

3 By turning Circle Oaks Drive into a major commuter road,
4 and increasing traffic eight times over now, ambient noise will
5 increase from 33 to between 54 and 90 decibels. Right now, three
6 to five large trucks per week travel uphill past my home. Yes,
7 they're a racket. About 85 to 90 decibels from 50 feet away. I
8 work at home, and have to close my windows when they go by. With
9 Walt Ranch, how many will we have per day during construction,
10 during harvest, or while Napa County is hauling up water because
11 the wells ran dry.

12 What about the drone of chainsaws and bulldozers clear-
13 cutting the wild land forest right behind us. Or the constant
14 grind of gravel crushing and sorting. What about the blasting?
15 Blasting, is this West Virginia we're talking about?

16 How loud is all this? The Draft EIR says the prevailing
17 background noise will increase to approximately 62 decibels five
18 or six days a week. The level I'm talking right now. And that's
19 not counting the dynamite blasts and the heavy trucks. What does
20 this mean? It simply means that it will get much louder where I
21 live.

22 What's loudness mean? Loudness is a response to sound. It's
23 agreed that a ten-decibel increase equals, and it is a perceived
24 doubling of loudness. Increasing the prevailing noise from 33 to
25 43 is twice as loud. 43 to 53 is twice again. 53 to 62 is about
26 twice again. Six times as loud as current. This isn't a little
27 bit folks. If you think my droning voice is irritating you,
28 imagine what everything you do is peppered with industrial

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1 noises as loud as my voice, all day, five or six days a week.
2 And this isn't just for a week or a month, but for four years of
3 construction, and in perpetuity once it starts operation. And oh
4 yeah, those vineyard fans in the middle of the night.

5 So, what are the impacts of this noise? The Draft EIR
6 identifies annoyance, nuisance, dissatisfaction, interference
7 with speech, sleep, and learning, and physiological effects such
8 as hearing loss, and sudden startling. How does Hall propose to
9 remediate these things? They don't. They say they have the right
10 to farm where no farm now exists. They state that the proposed
11 project would not cause a substantial permanent increase, this
12 is in quotes, in ambient noise levels above what is in character
13 of the surroundings. And they also say that it would not cause
14 substantial temporary, or periodic increases in ambient noise
15 levels. So, this is an outright lie.

16 The surrounding uses are residential, not construction, and
17 not industrial agriculture. The Draft EIR does not address noise
18 pollution, other than to counter that Hall has the right to farm
19 where no farm exists, and destroy the quality of life of the
20 close to 1,000 people who live in its proximity. Thank you.

21 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you. I'd like the next three
22 speakers, Michelle Benvenuto, Sue Wagner, and Sandra Ericson.

23 SUE WAGNER: Did you want us to go in order? I happened to
24 get here first. I was closest.

25 MICHELLE BENVENUTO: That's fine.

26 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Ms. Benvenuto, yields to--go ahead.

27 MS WAGNER: Thank you. My name is Sue Wagner. I live at 66
28 Juniper Drive in Circle Oaks. And I appreciate the opportunity

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1 to come and talk to you today about my concerns about this
2 project.

3 Circle Oaks is a Napa County community of 182 residences,
4 which is nearly surrounded by the Walt property. Our rural
5 subdivision of 280 acres has dedicated 70 percent of its acreage
6 to greenbelt. The greenbelt will always remain undeveloped. Most
7 of it is oak woodlands, which adds to the ambience and beauty of
8 our community. We value our forests so much, in fact, that our
9 trees are protected by our CC&Rs, which prohibits cutting them
10 down without permission.

11 The people who live in Circle Oaks will be most profoundly
12 affected by this project. Many of us are average citizens and
13 have never before been politically active. Some of us have spent
14 hundreds of hours on this effort, trying to understand the DEIR
15 and reaching out to our neighbors to alert them to the concerns
16 that we have about this project. We have taken away time from
17 jobs, our families and our leisure time to devote as much time
18 as we can to understanding this project and the impacts that it
19 will have on our lives. I have personally donated hundreds of
20 dollars to various organizations committed to challenging this
21 project, as have many others. These are significant outlays for
22 folks of our income range.

23 Circle Oaks has been my home for 27 years. I chose to live
24 here because of its natural beauty, serenity, and the ability to
25 live a rural lifestyle with all the best amenities. I mention
26 these facts to help you gauge the level of deep concern which
27 has brought all of these people here today.

28 Circle Oaks is literally downhill, downstream and downwind

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1 from Walt Ranch. While the DEIR does recognize that some project
2 activities may result in an impact on the quality of our lives,
3 I believe the impacts are grossly understated. Experts will
4 address these deficiencies in greater detail in the form of
5 written comments in the DEIR. Napa County officials who have the
6 power to approve this project need to understand the residents
7 of Circle Oaks fear literally losing their investments in their
8 homes.

9 The DEIR is deficient because it doesn't answer these hard
10 questions. If our wells go dry despite the best efforts of the
11 experts to assure us that there is plenty of water, who will
12 guarantee that there will be no loss of water to our community?
13 If land slippage caused by the conversion of hundreds of acres
14 of untouched oak forestland to vineyard causes cracks in our
15 home foundations, who will be responsible to repair them? If air
16 or water toxic pollution from construction or vineyard
17 operations causes illness or water quality concerns, who will be
18 responsible for paying medical bills or for toxic cleanup?

19 Our community dreads the destruction of our tranquil
20 lifestyle if we are subjected to three or four years of blasting
21 and rock crushing. It will be like living next door to a quarry.
22 Who will monitor this activity? Residents of Circle Oaks face
23 drastic increases in commercial vehicle traffic as was just
24 discussed.

25 Not only will our human population face untenable changes
26 to our environment, wildlife that we've grown to--all to enjoy
27 in our community on a daily basis will likewise be affected by
28 the destruction of their natural habitat.

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1 Walt Ranch is bad for our community, bad for the watersheds
2 and bad for the environment. Please reject this project and send
3 a message to vineyard developers, hands off our hills and
4 watersheds. Thank you.

5 MICHELLE BENVENUTO: Michelle Benvenuto, the Winegrowers of
6 Napa County. Winegrowers are--our members are wineries, vineyard
7 owners and vineyard management companies.

8 Napa County is governed by the General Plan. This is a plan
9 that is a long-term plan that required extensive public input.
10 It's adopted by the Board of Supervisors and it recognizes that
11 preserving agriculture is the highest and best use of land. Our
12 General Plan is only six years old and it is the guiding
13 document. We are still operating within the projections of the
14 General Plan and our vineyard development is actually under the
15 projections.

16 When it comes to water, I sat on the groundwater advisory
17 committee for three years and Napa County has been monitoring
18 water since mid-1900s. And while we're currently in a drought,
19 it looked at long-term planning. And we realized that the Napa
20 Valley floor is stable and that there is site-specific analysis
21 needed for the hillsides. We talk about the water availability
22 analysis changes, that essentially--what it's looking at--is
23 looking at site-specific analysis in the hillsides, which this
24 does.

25 When it comes to vineyards, the success of vineyards and
26 the wine industry sustains the economic viability of the
27 valley's agricultural tradition. The industry is consistently on
28 the cutting edge of incorporating environmentally sustainable

1 practices that avoid or mitigate significant environmental
2 impacts. In order for Napa Valley to remain one of America's
3 treasured farming communities, we must work together to balance
4 growth, support long-term planning and protect our right to
5 farm. Thank you.

6 SANDRA ERICSON: My name is Sandra Ericson and I chair the
7 St. Helena Climate Protection Force, for six years, and
8 currently I run a website in St. Helena called shwindow.org in
9 which I attempt to bridge the gap between government and people
10 in terms of knowledge.

11 Because Napa County lags behind in its digital
12 communication with people, it too often--tacitly endorses the
13 use of public resources for private interests. It seems not to
14 recognize the growing limitations of future resources of water,
15 air, roads, natural environment, and it has not met the
16 enforcement challenge, which is currently now a lottery, and
17 therefore, enforcing something in such a distant, remote
18 location is not encouraging.

19 The zoning of the Walt Ranch property and most of the
20 immediately--most--needs to be immediately reviewed in light of
21 changing climate conditions, greenhouse gases, drought,
22 agriculture transition caused by climate change, because it
23 won't always be grapes here anymore. New pressures on wildlife
24 survival and the new tourism hurricane, as one person termed it.

25 The State has recently passed groundwater laws and has
26 mandated that Napa County, as a medium-high risk in both of its
27 aquifers, I think the point rank is 20.8, something to that
28 effect, is mandated to have groundwater management laws in place

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1 and it's one reason why developers are rushing to get these
2 projects through before those laws are in place.

3 In the--University of Hawaii has come out with the Mora
4 Study, which predicts that for this latitude, 2049 is the
5 tipping point for when we will have more bad days than good
6 days. And that's another reason why they're rushing to get their
7 projects in place.

8 And further, the resources and the mapping of these kinds
9 of scientific studies have brought out new features that need to
10 be considered in EIRs. For instance, there needs to be a
11 measurement of the loss of carbon sink. Trees act as a carbon
12 sink up into the high 80s. Vineyards--I think it's two point
13 something. Very low. So taking out all those trees is taking out
14 more than the trees and more than the wildlife. It's taking out
15 future and how carbon is controlled in this county and at some
16 point there will be a carbon management plan that will be highly
17 detailed.

18 This review that should happen should stop development. It
19 should be open, inclusive, two-way, use current research and it
20 should realistically address this new, more limited future of
21 California land use. If this permit is approved, Napa County
22 will not get another chance soon enough to continue as it is
23 presently envisioned. And the information on the General Plan is
24 already old. Since 2006 to 2009 when it was put together, the
25 drought and climate information was simply not correctly
26 assessed. Thank you.

27 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I'm going to call the next group of
28 speakers, then I think we'll take a break. That will have been

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1 about an hour and a half and we'll be halfway through the cards.
2 Again, if you want to speak, we encourage you to please fill out
3 a card just so that we can keep everything moving. So we'll do
4 three more and then we'll take a ten-minute break. Tom Vreeland,
5 Jane Mead and Jeff Roberts.

6 TOM VREELAND: Hello. I'm Tom Vreeland. I live at 2391 Atlas
7 Peak. I have lived there for about 17 years, but am a native
8 Napan. Thank you for--everyone, for being here today. I'll try
9 and make my questions brief.

10 Water, like most things, doesn't flow uphill. So the full
11 study was done looking at a flat area, in essence, not looking
12 at--further down Atlas Peak, all the residents there, to see
13 what the impact is on the well. And so my question is, is what
14 has been done to analyze the water level trends? Have permits
15 for deeper wells been tracked? Have permits for holding tanks
16 been tracked?

17 In the time I've lived on the hill, I watched--ah--the
18 surrounding areas. I drive up and down the road. When I first
19 moved up there, I only saw well-drilling rigs for new
20 construction. The past few years I see significant amount of re-
21 drilling of wells at existing properties. I see a lot of holding
22 tanks going in where there were no holding tanks before. Has
23 this been analyzed to see, you know, what is going to be the
24 impact of sucking all the water out up above to houses further
25 down? Granted, I live sort of near the pet cemetery, which puts
26 it in perspective relative to this project.

27 The other question is, is well service companies, when they
28 service a well, they log what the water levels are. Has any

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1 attempt been to gather that information to see what the trend is
2 in terms of well water levels?

3 The last point, so I had said I'd try to be brief, is that
4 there's talk about monitoring of the wells, which I think is
5 great, on the whole property. My question is, it doesn't do any
6 good to monitor something if there aren't guidelines in terms of
7 what's going to happen if something happens. Meaning, where will
8 the water levels go before something has to happen and the
9 pumping stopped?

10 And so to me, for the project to move forward, there needs
11 to be some specification in essence to say if this happens, then
12 this happens. Not just we're going to monitor things and watch
13 the well go dry. Thank you very much.

14 JANE MEAD: My name is Jane Mead, I live at 3029 Atlas Peak
15 Road. And I'm going to read my comments. I'll just pick up where
16 Mr. Vreeland left off. But first of all I want to thank you for
17 the opportunity to have this meeting.

18 In the meeting that he held at the Montage [sic] Resorts on
19 November 6, Mr. Hall offered to install perimeter wells for the
20 purpose of monitoring water levels and promised that he would
21 stop water use if neighboring wells were affected. I appreciate
22 this and believe it should be spelled out in the EIR, including
23 monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

24 Secondly, it strikes me as worthy of further explanation in
25 the EIR that the cumulative effects of water usage for the Walt
26 project and the neighboring Circle S project, each of which has
27 a small fraction of their total proposed vineyards already
28 planted, was established by halting the draw at Circle S and

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1 drawing from one well at Walt Ranch, and I have more in a letter
2 about this, but for the sake of time.

3 It is no less perplexing to me that the recovery portion of
4 this test had to be cut short after five days and fifty-one
5 percent recovery because, and I'm quoting from the EIR, all
6 existing vineyards were in dire need of being irrigated. Both
7 Walt Ranch and Circle S Ranch had suspended vineyard irrigation
8 throughout the testing period and the air temperature had
9 increased in the area by the end of the recovery period. And
10 that's the end of the quote.

11 The average daily temperature in Napa during the well
12 recovery periods were in order by day: 64, 61, 58, 60 and 62
13 Fahrenheit. I'm not reassured by this. And I am not reassured
14 that our well, our grove of redwoods, our spring, all just on
15 the other side of Atlas Peak Road, are going to survive the
16 unprecedented water usage. I do not believe that these pockets
17 of Sonoma volcanics recognize property boundaries.

18 The Halls believe that the DEIR represents restraint. As
19 you go up into the hills around Napa Valley the proportion of
20 one's property that is suitable for vineyard decreases. To fail
21 to acknowledge this as a fact of hillside vineyard development
22 is disingenuous. The DEIR points out the efforts the Halls will
23 make to mitigate the potential destructiveness of this project
24 in accordance with the County regulations. But the larger
25 picture and the reason I believe that this project is so
26 controversial is that they seem to have no regard for the laws
27 of nature. I believe this is going to be a problem.

28 JEFF ROBERTS: Director Morrison, thank you for the time.

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1 My name is Jeff Roberts and I live at 111 Ridgecrest Drive in
2 Circle Oaks. I've read many different parts of the DEIR prepared
3 by Staff and have several concerns with various parts of the
4 draft. One of my concerns is the dust created during the
5 construction period, which is for four years. The report states,
6 activity will occur within 30 feet of the nearest residence.

7 Two of the recommended mitigation items were sweep Circle
8 Oaks Drive daily with water sweepers if visible soil material is
9 carried onto adjacent streets. Another one is, suspend
10 excavation and grading activity when winds, instantaneous gusts,
11 exceed 25 miles per hour.

12 Please address who will be doing the monitoring of the wind
13 speeds every day and how it will be recorded. How can you assure
14 that this will be being done? Self-monitoring is not an option.
15 It's a conflict of interest. The impact from earth moving all
16 day every day during this period will require more than a street
17 sweeping. This area is historically windier than other areas of
18 Napa.

19 I also dispute the figure 25 miles per hour as being the
20 measurement, where even a ten-mile-an-hour wind in the right
21 direction is enough to move fine dust a great distance. I
22 believe that there are not enough trained expert or qualified
23 employees within the entire county to monitor, inspect and
24 ensure all the mitigation measures you have set forth will be
25 followed and enforced.

26 Have you considered all that is being monitored for this
27 one project? Self-monitoring is not an acceptable alternative.
28 The lack of manpower and funds by the County to monitor and

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1 enforce is telling of the nature and scope of this project.

2 In closing I have a few questions for you. What will the
3 developer or the County do to remove or prevent the ensuing dust
4 over our homes, our outdoor plants, vehicles, buildings, and
5 from our air conditioning filters for the next four years? There
6 will be more than a little fine dust on the roads.

7 Will the County provide a study on wind conditions and
8 drift patterns over the entire Circle Oaks community before
9 assuming that there is not enough potential for dust to travel
10 further? Which of the mitigation components for each item
11 addressed in the DEIR or Final EIR will the County provide
12 qualified, trained staff to monitor, report and enforce
13 accountability. Self-monitoring is not acceptable because of
14 conflict of interest.

15 Who will be responsible for keeping all records of
16 monitoring and compliance for all the different mitigation
17 requirements? After all the mitigation protection for trees,
18 wildlife and ecosystems, where is the protection from the
19 emotional stress and psychological harm that this project may
20 have on the citizens you have a responsibility to consider? The
21 most obvious concern is that it is not a good fit for this
22 property and will potentially have devastating impact on human,
23 as well as wildlife that it affects. Thank you for the
24 opportunity.

25 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay. I don't know about you all, but I
26 could use a stretch, so let's break till forty after--or I'm
27 sorry, twenty till.

28 --o0o--

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--43--

1 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I know we'd all like the break to go on
2 a little bit further, but we've still got a number of speakers
3 left who wish to be heard as the--and have the same opportunity
4 that the people have already had.

5 It is a little warm and dry in here. If anybody is thirsty,
6 there is some water and some paper cups out the door to the
7 right if you are getting a little dry. I know this room is kind
8 of arid.

9 So during the break we had one speaker ask to be removed,
10 we had two more added. But if we keep the same pace as we did
11 for the first part of the meeting, I believe we can probably
12 adjourn around 4:15, so, in which case we can all, perhaps, beat
13 the rush hour on Soscol and Silverado. Traffic is an entirely
14 different issue.

15 So if the next three speakers are ready, we'll go with
16 Lynna Roberts, Annette Krammer and Jim Lincoln.

17 LYNNA ROBERTS: Hello. My name is Lynna Roberts. I live at
18 111 Ridgecrest Drive in Circle Oaks. My husband and I moved to
19 Circle Oaks four years ago and before finding this beautiful
20 rural community in the hills of Napa, we never dreamed we could
21 afford to live in the country anywhere near Napa. We are now
22 living our dream.

23 To the investors of Hall Brambletree and Craig and Kathryn
24 Hall, our so-called neighbors, it may seem a humble dream. The
25 reason our home was affordable is because not everyone wants to
26 make the sacrifices of living so far out. It's a 20- to 25-
27 minute drive on a winding, two-lane mountain road just to town
28 or back. Circle Oaks residents make this drive because to quote

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1 many who live there, it's worth it. Like others, we moved there
2 because it's quiet, peaceful and beautiful with nature and
3 wildlife abounding all around us. We never imagined that the
4 County would consider allowing a rural community of fifty years
5 to suffer the incredible negative impact of a project like the
6 Walt Ranch vineyard conversion. This project title makes it
7 sound so benign when in truth it should be called the Walt Ranch
8 destruction of 28,616 trees project or the Walt Ranch wipeout of
9 wildlife project or the Walt Ranch use of 69 million gallons of
10 water per year project.

11 I live at the top of Circle Oaks, where if permitted, the
12 Hall Brambletree Walt Ranch project will be just beyond the
13 hillside near our home. The stillness of rural living allows
14 every sound to be heard loudly. A voice, a cough, a birdsong
15 carries through the air across the distance. I ask you, the Napa
16 County Planning department, to honestly consider if it is
17 appropriate in such an area to allow a four-year construction
18 project of blasting, grinding, digging, heavy equipment traffic
19 and all other related sounds in such a close proximity to our
20 rural community.

21 Does the EIR justify harm to people and the environment? I
22 ask you. As you determine your decision to sincerely consider
23 how you would like living next to a four-year project of this
24 magnitude and forever after have gondolas roaring up and down
25 the streets of your once quiet neighborhoods and destroying the
26 roads and even endangering those who walk in the streets due to
27 no sidewalks.

28 Please ask yourself. Would you like pesticides and dust

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1 rolling down over the hillsides with the often present wind and
2 fog, damaging the quality of the air you breathe, endangering
3 your health? And at any time, but especially in a state of
4 emergency drought, would you want the risk of depletion of the
5 watershed that supplies water to your homes? Would you invite
6 the devaluation of your property? Would you not rise up and
7 protest such an unreasonable project? Would you not stand before
8 those who are responsible for protecting you and ask for their
9 help?

10 I ask you to refuse the permitting of a construction
11 project of such dynamic size and such an extreme scope of
12 destruction to forests and wildlife and potential devastation to
13 the lifestyle of an entire existing community of 179 families. I
14 ask you to serve this county and its residents responsibly and
15 step up with compassion and the high integrity it takes to be
16 good stewards of this valley's remaining natural resources
17 before it's too late. I ask you to seriously consider when
18 enough is enough. Thank you for your time.

19 ANNETTE KRAMMER: Fellow Napa residents. I am Annette
20 Kramer, 351 Circle Oaks Drive, and I want to know who is taking
21 the risks if this development goes forward? What are the
22 benefits? Who is the beneficiary? The residents of the county
23 and the neighbors around the Walt Ranch are being asked to
24 accept a lot of significant costs, a lot of real risks.

25 We may lose our water, in which case we would lose much of
26 the value we have invested in our homes. We will lose the peace
27 and quiet that is the reason that we live where we do. During
28 four years of construction we will be living beside the

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1 effective combination of a rock quarry and a logging camp with
2 construction traffic running past our doors. Anyone who needs to
3 sell their property during that period is unlikely to find an
4 enthusiastic buyer.

5 After the woods are stripped and the grapes are growing,
6 the substantial draw on the local water supply and the
7 infrastructure damage will continue to negatively affect our
8 property values, breaking apart a rare and genuinely wild
9 ecosystem, taking down thousands of mature trees, wildlife
10 destruction, smoke, pesticides, fungicides, traffic noise.
11 Really, these are bad enough on their own. But they are also
12 likely to damage the value of our modest homes. We cannot afford
13 it. And why should we for someone else's profit?

14 It seems like all the risks here are ours. Perhaps the
15 benefit to the county is in additional tax revenue. Of course,
16 if we lose our water, potable water will have to be trucked in,
17 water reserves elsewhere will get used up in the process, damage
18 to the roads and the infrastructure will cost the county. The
19 county is all of us. Do the property rights of one large
20 landowner trump the rights of several hundred small ones? If we
21 continue to approve projects that take down our woods and
22 deplete our water supply for the sake of more and more business,
23 more and more wine, more and more tourism, we will destroy the
24 value of all of these things. People visit Napa County from all
25 over the world for its beauty. And yes, of course, for its wine.
26 We already provide five million visitors a year with wine. How
27 much more do we need?

28 We need balance and we need a fair assessment of risks and

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1 the benefits. If this and similar projects are approved, then
2 the residents of Napa County will want our representatives to
3 explain to us why we are expected to take these personal risks
4 on this massive scale for the benefit and profit of a private
5 venture. Thank you.

6 JIM LINCOLN: Jim Lincoln, Napa County Farm Bureau. My
7 natural resources committee met with both the applicant and the
8 opposition to listen to both sides, hear their concerns, we
9 appreciate them taking time to come and speak with us and again
10 we encourage them to speak to one another.

11 I think there's a lot of misinformation going back and
12 forth, but I'm here today to speak against the additional burden
13 of a public hearing and an unprecedented additional step in the
14 already long, complex and arduous process that is the erosion
15 control program.

16 I was around in '91 when the erosion control programs were
17 started. There was pandemonium then, that that was going to be
18 the end of the industry. Since that time we've raised our game.
19 The standards have gotten more rigorous every year.

20 The--we're to a point now where the standard for erosion
21 control plans on a project is no increase in peak flow of water
22 off the project, no increase in soil erosion off the project
23 above the background levels, so it seems why are we adding a
24 public hearing and additional regulations to zero sum increases?

25 The County has a municipal process to meet these very
26 stringent standards, the highest in California, thereby the
27 highest in the nation, for agriculture. It's ministerial if the
28 project meets these stringent standards that it should be

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1 approved. You know, we support the current process as robust,
2 and as costly as it is, we support the importance of allowing
3 agricultural use of the land. We support the right to farm. And
4 I always add the word, responsibly, after the right to farm. And
5 we support the right to farm with best management practices.

6 So in the future, if need be, we would appreciate the
7 opportunity to work with the County to minimize any further
8 burdens on growers obtaining permits for agriculture and keep
9 the industry healthy and not overburdened. Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Next three speakers: Barbara Monnetta,
11 Chris Benz and Carl Schmitt.

12 [UNKNOWN:] Barbara Monnetta left.

13 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay. Thank you. Chris Benz. Thank you.

14 CHRIS BENZ: My name is Chris Benz. I've been a resident of
15 Napa for 25 years. I work in the wine industry and I'm familiar
16 with the water requirements for vineyards and wineries.

17 I'm very concerned about the amount of water that the Walt
18 Ranch vineyard development will use, particularly in light of
19 what we've been hearing about the state of the aquifers in the
20 area. I think this information was unknown to the County and I
21 don't know that it can be adequately measured.

22 I'm also concerned because of the potential for additional
23 development on the many parcels that make up this property due
24 to existing zoning. I do believe that the Halls intend to be
25 good environmental stewards. With Walt Ranch they have the
26 opportunity to be environmental heroes by foregoing development
27 as others have done and working with county agencies to protect
28 this land forever. They would leave a lasting and very personal

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1 legacy to Napa County. Thank you.

2 CARL SCHMITT: Hi. My name's Carl Schmitt. My wife and I
3 live at 8 Rockrose Court, and I wanted to thank you, Mr.
4 Morrison, for giving us the opportunity to speak on this
5 important issue. I don't want to repeat the comments that have
6 already been made by the neighbors that have come up here and
7 spoken so eloquently.

8 I think it boils down to two points: Balancing the rights
9 of multiple homeowners versus the rights of investors. And where
10 does the line get drawn. At what point do we say there are
11 things bigger than having the 402nd winery in Napa Valley. We
12 already have more people coming here than Disney World. Tourists
13 come here because it's beautiful. There is 400 plus wineries.

14 I would echo the sentiments of the previous speaker, what
15 an opportunity to, instead of creating winery number 402, to
16 create a legacy that transforms this area of the Walt Ranch into
17 something that exists in perpetuity. That's a legacy. Winery
18 number 402, eh, pretty sure it's going to be another stop for a
19 Greyhound bus.

20 My wife and I moved out here from downtown Chicago. We
21 moved into Circle Oaks ranch--Circle Oaks, six months ago. The
22 first few weeks we were stunned, and Peter mentioned this
23 earlier. It is silent in Circle Oaks. Not quiet, not minor
24 traffic, but it's silent. And the increase in the decibel
25 sounds, and I know four years, you know, it's the time it takes
26 to go to high school, but the increase in the sound and the
27 change in the lifestyle factoring in, then, 69 million gallons
28 of water, where does that come from. Where do we say, you know,

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1 enough is enough.

2 And so I would look to the County as the protector of our
3 rights. We only exist because you gave us the right to have our
4 houses there. And perhaps the best use of the land isn't
5 agriculture. The best use of the land is the natural existence
6 of the land. Thank you.

7 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Elizabeth Bosch, Tom Dinkel and Marcie
8 Dinkel.

9 ELIZABETH BOSCH: Good afternoon. I'm Elizabeth Bosch. I
10 live in Browns Valley in Napa. I've been here for 27 years and I
11 just think it's amazing what we've heard today and I want to
12 just add a few thoughts to that.

13 You know, our system of law, currently, I say, elevates
14 corporate decision making over people. Thus industry expands its
15 operations no matter what the impact on communities and nature,
16 which is what brings us here today.

17 Let's review just a few facts of life. Humans are
18 themselves over 70 percent water. We can live two months
19 without food, but only five days without water. Water is the
20 lifeblood of all living things. The oak woodlands, where my
21 neighbors and I now call home, are the lungs of this area, and
22 they help remove carbon and then release oxygen into the
23 atmosphere. Its leaf litter, roots and soil, carbon content are
24 like the heart, slowly distributing water downhill and
25 underground to bring life to our streams and aquifers.

26 The carbon content purifies the water as it percolates
27 through the soil, setting much--acting, really, much like our
28 own kidneys. The creeks it feeds are like arteries, bringing

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1 life-giving water to the once-renowned steelhead runs that
2 filled our rivers and their tributaries. These streams have been
3 so decimated from tree clearances for hillside vineyards and
4 wineries and water removal from both creeks and aquifers that
5 our year-round streams are pitiful remains of what they once
6 were.

7 Our watersheds are imperiled. They cannot withstand further
8 amputations. Mitigations can never keep up with the attack on
9 our watersheds and this Draft EIR is no different. We protect
10 our--we need to protect our ancient woodlands. Why not let them
11 do their work?

12 Climate disruptions is upon us now. According to the IPCC
13 [sic] Fifth Assessment we just learned we are set to inflict
14 severe and irresistible impacts upon people and the natural
15 world unless carbon emissions are cut sharply and rapidly. The
16 idea of skinning alive hundreds of acres of vibrant, pulsing,
17 breathing, hillside woodlands all while suffering the worst
18 drought in recorded history is foolhardy. Forests' temper are
19 carbon pollution. Their destruction cannot be mitigated. We
20 should be planting trees like there is no tomorrow. The window
21 of opportunity to save the oceans and the air that supports life
22 as we know it is about to slam shut.

23 Given this reality, how can the County ignore the science
24 of a climate in peril and rob its current and future generations
25 of the protections of our forests.

26 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Are Tom and Marcie Dinkel here?

27 [UNKNOWN:] No. It's been covered. Thank you.

28 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay, thank you. Does that go for

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1 Marcie as well?

2 [UNKNOWN:] Yes.

3 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you. You guys are making this
4 easy. Jim Wilson, Charlene Steen and Lisa Hirayama.

5 JIM WILSON: Thank you very much, Director Morrison, for
6 having this hearing for us. My name is Jim Wilson. I live at
7 5000 Monticello Road in Capell Valley. Our property shares about
8 a mile or more of the property line between ours and the Walt
9 Ranch. We're mostly downstream, or completely downstream from
10 their property.

11 I love where I live. I moved there as a young 25-year-old.
12 I raised a family with my wife there on her mother's property.
13 My children are fifth generation. I love it because I know it.
14 And because I love it I want to protect it like anything that
15 you would do when you love something.

16 This love for this land didn't come overnight. It came
17 because I was exposed to it over the years and I grew to love it
18 because I realized that I needed it as much as it needed me and
19 so we have a relationship.

20 I brought a little piece of reality to show today. This is
21 a piece of live oak that I took from our property. This is the
22 same sort of thing that grows all around Capell Valley. It
23 serves us well. We undervalue the ecological services provided
24 by our forestlands in our neighborhoods and over the entire
25 earth like we're hearing today. I don't want to rehash some of
26 what has been already mentioned about our slamming up against
27 physical limits of climate disruption and water scarcity. These
28 are reasons alone for a moratorium while we work out the current

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1 situation we're in and try to understand it better so that we
2 can make more intelligent decisions about how to develop our
3 precious resources.

4 So imagine my surprise when I woke up the other day and I
5 realized that I liked Walt. I liked it because for the first
6 time I could see clearly what was going on around me and in my
7 county and so I'd like to share that piece of crystallized
8 enlightenment that came upon me.

9 This is what cumulative impacts look like. Ten acres here,
10 or a thousand trees removed. Twenty acres there, 2,000 trees
11 scraped clean down to bare ground. Got a problem with that?
12 Well, multiply five harmless acres of wine grapes times 65
13 blocks and you get 350 acres now. So why wait for cumulative
14 impacts to build imperceptively over time when you can--when
15 they can be fully felt today.

16 This is what I've learned from the Walt project. It's like
17 development on steroids so someone like myself, who is not all
18 that perceptive, can see, really, what's going on. So Napa
19 developers and planners, please take note.

20 It's unfortunate now, but there's more than meets the eye
21 on this 15-hundred-page Draft EIR. These cumulative impacts
22 don't stop here. Most everyone in this room knows that. The
23 County knows they don't stop here. It's the tip of the iceberg.
24 It's a Trojan horse. We need to call it out.

25 Why aren't we talking about reasonably foreseeable future
26 development? There are 35 parcels. There will be 35 LLCs with
27 vineyards, zoned for mansions, swimming pools, wineries complete
28 with their marketing events centers. Shouldn't the Draft EIR be

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1 considering the future impacts of a possible wally world?

2 CHARLENE STEEN: I'm Charlene Steen. I live at 2100 Atlas
3 Peak Road. And as I looked over the EIR, I'm very concerned
4 about the water in the aquifer. The EIR says pumping of wells
5 may cause drawdown that could affect neighboring wells. [They're
6 filing] this unlikely because they say the water will be
7 recharged by rain and they use the standard that it's based--
8 their projections are based on an average rainfall of 35 inches
9 per year. I examined a bunch of different sites on rainfall in
10 Napa County and all I could find is that we have an average of
11 between 20 and 27 inches a year, not 35 inches, so the aquifer
12 will not be recharged the way the EIR suggests. I think they are
13 overlooking that.

14 In addition I wanted to say one word about the oxygen, that
15 removal of all the trees and all the plants, the loss of oxygen
16 versus vineyards. There are figures out there somewhere or it
17 can be measured that we will lose a tremendous amount of oxygen
18 because of the removal of all the trees and plant life, which is
19 not addressed in the EIR and that means that we will also have
20 climate change that it will probably be warmer in the Napa
21 Valley and I would like to see that addressed as well. Thank
22 you.

23 LISA HIRAYAMA: My name is Lisa Hirayama. I live at 16
24 Dogwood Court in Circle Oaks, which is in the Capell Creek
25 watershed. In the conservation section of the County's General
26 Plan on page 5, I found the following statement: Healthy
27 functioning watersheds are vital for a healthy environment and
28 healthy economy. And Napa County has made great strides in

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1 acknowledging and protecting these natural systems. The
2 residents of the county rely on healthy watersheds to provide
3 adequate water for domestic and agricultural purposes, as well
4 as to support the existence, use and enjoyment of natural
5 resources.

6 Certain words from the General Plan need emphasis. In
7 particular, healthy, functioning watersheds, healthy environment
8 and healthy economy. A healthy environment and a healthy economy
9 depend on healthy watersheds. Stripping nearly a square mile of
10 hillside lands of 28,600 mature trees on slopes greater than
11 five percent, as the Walt Ranch project proposes, will degrade
12 the watersheds of both Milliken and Capell creeks.

13 Mitigation attempts offered in the Walt Ranch Draft EIR
14 cannot adequately compensate for this damage to the watersheds.
15 Planting two, three or more trees to replace these mature trees
16 is nothing more than fluff and window dressing. New trees, no
17 matter how many are planted, will not have the mature root
18 structure to prevent runoff and the accumulation of silt in the
19 creeks and streams of both watersheds.

20 Rector Reservoir suffered sedimentation problems when a
21 hillside vineyard was developed several decades ago. Since 1986,
22 erosion problems from vineyards have occurred in the Friesen
23 Lakes watershed, which is part of Angwin's water supply. That
24 area has suffered landslides, washouts and other problems caused
25 by vineyard runoff.

26 In 2003 an eroded hillside vineyard dumped--eroded hillside
27 vineyard dumped hundreds of cubic yards of soil into Lake
28 Whitehead, causing sedimentation problems for the filtration

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1 system. Will this be the fate of the Milliken and Capell
2 watersheds if Walt Ranch is allowed to be developed?

3 Those in the City of Napa should be interested in how much
4 and how the removal of 28,600 trees could increase sedimentation
5 in the Milliken reservoir. How much will reach the Napa River
6 and ultimately The Bay? How much will reach Lake Berryessa?
7 Damage to these watersheds will have far-reaching, negative
8 effects. And for what. So a Texas-based corporation can make a
9 profit for its investors? These people are not our neighbors or
10 friends. Why should they be allowed to damage our environment
11 and economy?

12 Healthy watersheds do indeed promote a healthy environment
13 and a healthy economy. Who will ultimately pay the price for the
14 degradation of now-healthy watersheds. Is Napa County going to
15 guarantee that the watersheds will remain healthy? Once the
16 damage is done, it will be irreversible.

17 This Board must consider the greater good when it considers
18 the Walt Ranch project and the cumulative impact it will have on
19 wildlife, residents and the ecosystems. Thank you.

20 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Could we have Jim Mills, Nancy Tamarisk
21 and Pamela Cannon.

22 [Inaudible audience member comment.]

23 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Jim Mills? [Audience comment.] Oh,
24 okay.

25 NANCY TAMARISK: [I'm Jim Mills? What.] I have a couple
26 slides. These. Show the first one. It should say Sierra Club,
27 Nancy. There you go, yeah. The bigger the better.

28 Okay. My name's Nancy Tamarisk. I live at 11 Rockrose

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1 Court, also in Circle Oaks, but today I'm speaking for the Napa
2 Sierra Club. Of the many--we have a lot of issues we have with
3 this EIR, so today I'm just combining myself--confining myself
4 to the oak woodland destruction.

5 Historians estimate that in the early 1800s, about 45,000
6 mature oak trees lived in the Napa Valley. These numbers have
7 shrunk from 45,000 to under 1,000 trees. The Walt project
8 proposes clear cutting over 300 acres of oak woodland, more than
9 28,000 trees.

10 Adjacent to Walt is the Circle S property. Their EIR in
11 2008 specified destruction of almost 14,000 trees on 289 acres.
12 So between the Walt and the Circle S properties, we're talking
13 about the loss of 42,000 trees on Atlas Peak, almost 600 acres
14 of woodland lost.

15 In less than a decade these two projects are taking out as
16 many oaks and other large trees that it took over a century to
17 destroy on the Napa Valley floor. Some might call that progress.
18 Let's be clear. We're not just talking about trees, but a
19 fragile ecosystem based on the trees, nesting spots for birds,
20 food for animals, the tree roots stabilize the unstable soil of
21 Atlas Peak, preventing sediment from choking the creek,
22 preventing landslides and ground shifts under homes and roads.

23 Tree respiration removes greenhouse gases, combating global
24 warming. Tree canopies slow the raindrops so that the water
25 recharges the aquifer rather than just running off into the
26 creek. The law requires mitigation for destruction of oak
27 woodland. On Circle S and Walt, the major mitigations are
28 conservation easements for other oak woodlands on the property.

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1 Cut down 600 acres of trees, promise not to cut down another 600
2 acres of trees.

3 Let's see. If somebody stole half the money in your bank
4 account and promised not to touch the other half, would you feel
5 mitigated? Let's look at the mitigation plan. This map on the
6 back wall shows--is a slope map of the Walt Ranch produced by
7 the County. The areas in red are slopes over 30 percent. As you
8 see, most of the property is very steep, over 30 percent slopes.
9 Slopes over 30 percent cannot be planted in Napa County without
10 a use permit and expensive sediment and erosion control
11 measures.

12 Second slide please.

13 [Inaudible audience comment.]

14 MS. TAMARISK: That was the second slide? No. That's--
15 where's my second slide? Okay, yeah, it's hard to see, but
16 here's a [slim] map with a proposed vineyard shown in cross-
17 hatching. The proposed vineyards take up virtually all of the
18 land that is less than 30 percent slope. The Walt Ranch proposal
19 is to plant practically every plantable acre on the property.
20 The proposed conservation easement of 248 acres is a legal
21 fiction. These acres are not under threat of development because
22 their slopes are too steep. Twenty-eight thousand trees will be
23 cut down. Their value will be lost forever. The roots will not
24 hold the soil in place and guide the water to the aquifer. The
25 developers will gain a tax break for a conservation easement,
26 but they will evade their legal responsibility to mitigate the
27 damages they are causing to the environment and to their
28 neighbors by destruction of the oak woodland. Thank you.

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1 [REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMES MILLS:] I'm reading this for Jim
2 Mills. He's a neighbor of mine. He lives at 141 Ridgecrest
3 Drive. This is a response letter to the Hall Winery EIR.

4 I have lived in Circle Oaks for over 30 years and was a
5 Circle Oaks county water board member for seven years, 1985 to
6 1992. And during this time I served as president of the board
7 for five years. While serving as president I was directly
8 involved in developing the current water source for the
9 district.

10 When I first joined the Circle Oaks county water district
11 board, the only water source was spring water. And as the
12 community grew, we developed the horizontal wells in the area of
13 the springs. The purpose of the wells was to increase water
14 production and have greater control of our water. Unfortunately
15 these horizontal wells were very susceptible to earth movement
16 and the district pursued its third water source, vertical wells.

17 The district hired a geologist, hydrologist, that
18 specialize in locating aquifers. We drilled four wells. Two
19 wells did not produce water. One was troubled with long recovery
20 periods, and the fourth well is the current main water source.
21 The geologist described to me that the water source for Circle
22 Oaks is fragile, which is his words, and this fact has been
23 validated by the district's well recovery rate data.

24 While as president we keep data on the main wells' recovery
25 rate and during the dry season the recovery rate was
26 significantly greater than the wet season. According to the
27 geologist, the Walt Ranch shares the Circle Oaks county water
28 district's aquifer. It is of my opinion that the growth of Hall

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1 Winery on Walt Ranch will most likely have a negative impact on
2 the Circle Oaks community water supply. I feel that without
3 extensive studies on this shared aquifer that the County should
4 disapprove the expansion of Hall Winery.

5 Respectfully, James P. Mills. Thank you.

6 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Is Pamela Cannon here?

7 [Inaudible audience comment.]

8 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay, Thank you. So the next three
9 cards I have are Pierre Pulling, John Matson and Brian
10 McLaughlin.

11 PIERRE PULLING: My name is Pierre Pulling. I live at 149
12 Circle Oaks Drive, at the beginning--near the entrance to Circle
13 Oaks community. My background is 50 years in construction
14 everywhere in the world, and everywhere in the Bay Area, every
15 county in the Bay Area.

16 This week I read an article where the National Security
17 Agency [informed] the U.S. Congress, to the biggest security
18 issue in the world in ten years and getting worse is water
19 supply. But I'm going to comment on the transportation portion
20 of the Walt project and subsequent consequences.

21 No one has mentioned so far the Circle Oaks community is
22 built on what is known as unstable or they call it landslide
23 soil. I have not studied that but it seems to be the experience
24 of my house. I've only been there five years. It settled four
25 inches on the side where the road is. I presume some of this
26 [sort of] thing has to do with vibrations from the road, but I
27 can't prove that.

28 Another question I have is on this designation of Napa

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1 County defining a ranchland compared to agricultural usage. I've
2 always understood that ranchland is basically grazing land and
3 all of the sudden, since I've been here only five years in Napa
4 County, there seems to be some sort of equation. Ranchland is
5 vineyard land. Well, I question that.

6 Anyway, about the public road, the transportation, my main
7 issue. Have any of the County Supervisors personally driven over
8 to Circle Oaks to assess the safety of traffic on the steep
9 curves of Circle Oaks Drive, which is proposed to be used by the
10 Hall Winery construction vehicles?

11 The Circle Oaks community was developed and approved for
12 residential use over 50 years ago. It is a pre-existing
13 community of almost 200 homes. For Napa County to approve,
14 quote, initial construction traffic and ongoing industrial
15 traffic right to the center of an existing residential area is
16 irresponsible to me. Would a similar plan to the whole winery
17 project be permitted with proposed construction and industrial
18 traffic going right through an established residential suburb in
19 the city of Napa itself, for example?

20 Other issues on the road. Pedestrian safety. Oh. First, the
21 steep and sharp turns. Not safe for heavy traffic. Even if a
22 semi-trailer is proceeded by a flagged vehicle, the oncoming
23 traffic would have no space to pull aside so that large trucks
24 could proceed.

25 Pedestrian safety. You must know the school children have
26 to walk up without a sidewalk from 121. Strength of the road. Is
27 it rated for heavy traffic? It's a long-term effect of heavy
28 usage. Who is monitoring the cause of--the repairs [brought]

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1 that which Hall winery promises?

2 And the last thing is the slumping of the hills. It's been
3 a problem there and the vibration will affect, to me, it's
4 obvious, it will affect this community. The road safety and the
5 foundations of houses. Thank you for your attention.

6 JOHN MATSON: Thank you Mr. Morrison and Ms. Cahill. My
7 name's John Matson and I'm 37 Sunnyhill Lane, Napa, California.
8 And most of the things I wanted to say are pretty much been
9 covered so I'll try and expedite this.

10 I'm a concerned citizen of 35 years here in Napa. I'm
11 concerned about a few things about this project. The water
12 quality has got me a little concerned, the quality of the water-
13 -if it's--more water is pulled out in relation to like a glass,
14 if you put a spoonful of sugar in a full glass, you might not
15 taste as much, but if you get the glass two-thirds empty, it's
16 going to be stronger sugar taste. And I believe that's what's
17 going to happen to our water if they are allowed to pump out as
18 much water as they want to. It wouldn't be diluted as much.

19 The deforestation. That is a major concern for me. I live
20 at the bottom of the hill and if the root systems during heavy
21 rains don't hold it, the sediment running off could cause a
22 landslide. The property is a very fragile area. Circle Oaks is
23 very fragile. There has been slides in the past. It wouldn't
24 take much, a little bit of dynamite, a little bit of rain,
25 removal of root systems. I can't say enough about that.

26 I'm also concerned about the road and I'm concerned over
27 what Napa's going to do with the maintenance of the road. Our
28 infrastructure is under the road, our sewer and water lines. Who

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1 takes care of the road? As it sat right now, all this traffic
2 going over it, we have to maintain, according to my knowledge,
3 we're responsible right now for the sewer and the water pipes
4 under it and the draft says we'll come back and take care of it
5 to a--those aren't the exact words, but they said they would
6 pretty much do patching, fixing it. I don't know if that's
7 resurfacing, is that just a slurry seal, are they going to go
8 around and just fill in the cracks? That's a concern, because,
9 again, we are--is Napa willing to take responsibility of the
10 road, Circle Oaks Drive?

11 Real quick. The wind machines. I've lived near them.
12 They're loud. And I believe that's an environmental impact.
13 That's an impact. The noise of the wind machines during the day
14 or the night. Blasting. Again, that scares me.

15 I'd like to ask this board to stand up and set a precedence
16 here. We need to stop this madness. The trees make oxygen.
17 Carbon footprint. Napa should stand up as leaders. We have
18 plenty of wine industry here, we should stand up as leaders to
19 stop bulldozing virgin forest for a bottle of [cab].

20 Please stop this insanity. Do not approve this project.

21 BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN: Good afternoon. My name is Brian
22 McLaughlin. I live at 1871 Atlas Peak Road. I've been in Napa
23 for 32--34 years and at my current residence for over 20. When I
24 first moved in to that residence I had an ample water supply in
25 my well. By the way, my property's at the bottom. It's on the
26 valley floor at the bottom of Atlas Peak.

27 A few years ago I had to replace my well. Over 500 feet
28 deep, 27,000 dollars out of my pocket. And I believe it was all

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1 because of the cumulative effects of various wineries that are
2 all going in up in the mountain regions above me. Now--excuse
3 me. I'm hoping that simply because this project was approved
4 initially, or the initial phases of it were approved back when
5 things were different, that we don't hold that as ironclad. You
6 know, when something's broken, you fix it. And if that requires,
7 you know, reevaluating our laws and the overall plans, then
8 that's what should be done.

9 On the odd chance that this project gets approved, I would
10 hope you would consider some serious limitations to it, such as
11 no access onto Atlas Peak Road, or maybe all the residents whose
12 wells go dry get free water out of those lovely reservoirs that
13 were going to be built.

14 Anyway, that's all I have to say. Thank you.

15 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Okay. We have nine more cards. Again,
16 if you haven't spoken and want to, please fill one out. Karla
17 Bailey, David Heitzman and Bob--I'm not sure. [Wallin]?

18 KARLA BAILEY: Good afternoon. My name is Karla Bailey. My
19 husband and I live at 3085 Atlas Peak Road and have been there
20 for 45 years. Over 45. We experienced a terrible devastation in
21 the 1981 Atlas Peak fire, caused by man. But the next huge
22 event, also caused by man, The Walt Ranch development, could be
23 more than devastating. It could well be catastrophic.

24 Bill Pramuk is an arborist in Napa County and writes an
25 article for the Napa Register and I will not go through what he
26 says about the value of trees. I think we all know that at this
27 point.

28 It is imperative that this project be disallowed and send

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1 clear messages to wealthy potential developers that the
2 sustainability of people, wildlife, trees, endangered species,
3 etc. is more important than the sustainability of their wealth.
4 Craig Hall says he wants to be a good neighbor. Would that
5 include causing our property to become devalued when our water
6 supply is immeasurably diminished?

7 If I had applied for a project of this scope and then
8 realized the enormous opposition to it, quite frankly, I would
9 be embarrassed. I would withdraw my request, cut my losses
10 through tax write offs and truly be a good neighbor.

11 Napa County decision makers must realize that many local
12 residents are rather fed up with big money trying to make even
13 more money with huge developments at great expense and
14 inconvenience to local residents. An example is the Napa County
15 opera house.

16 Napa County must enact a moratorium on this type of
17 development until the status of our water availability is
18 truthfully known. I propose the Walt Ranch development be put to
19 the voters on the next ballot rather than be decided by so few.

20 One last comment in the form of a question. Mrs. Hall has
21 stated that the land gives her peace. Mrs. Hall, if the land
22 gives you peace, why would you want to destroy it? Thank you.

23 DAVID HEITZMAN: Good afternoon. My name is David Heitzman,
24 and I live at 23 Rockrose Court. I have four slides. There we
25 go. Thank you so much.

26 I've been up at Circle Oaks for 29 years. I've held a
27 General Contractor's license for 30 plus years. I've developed
28 property, had roads built, ran the equipment myself, paid for

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1 the geotechnical engineers, etc., and developed a road right
2 next to Circle Oaks on a slope with the same inherent problems
3 that Circle Oaks roads have. I've also been on the architectural
4 committee for Circle Oaks for the better part of those 29 years
5 that I've been up there and evaluated, or read every
6 geotechnical report which is required by the County and soils
7 engineering report by the County. And literally every one of
8 them states that Circle Oaks is an ancient landslide. It is,
9 including the EIR, literally every one of them starts with that
10 same statement.

11 Tumbling down the hill. There is some volcanic flows
12 through there, but it's cretaceous shale that has tumbled down
13 the hill. It's hard to compact shale to get anything above 90
14 percent for a road is hard.

15 Now let's take a look at this. This is Circle Oaks Drive.
16 This is on the grade going up. This is their main access. Right
17 there, that's just a four-inch--excuse me--a four-foot level,
18 just so we have some sort of perspective. I didn't have enough
19 equipment here and probes to do this properly. This is shooting-
20 -looking straight up the hill. We have no curbs. You can see
21 that the County has resurfaced this and you've got three
22 different curbs right there piled one on top of one another.
23 There's a better picture later on.

24 Next slide please. This is the road that up where that--
25 where that level is, it has dropped an inch and a half. The
26 crack there is about an inch open at that time and you can stick
27 down a probe and it goes down about two feet. You know, cracks
28 aren't straight, so the cracks go down a lot deeper than that.

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1 The hillside, it's peeling away there. This is an example, or an
2 apparent example of what the roads are up in Circle Oaks. This
3 would be the main way in. The alternative way in on Country Club
4 Drive has some additional problems. This is the biggest one of
5 concern.

6 Next slide please. That's about 22 inches in. Just take a--
7 that was a piece of ready bolt I was able to stick down in
8 there. Again you've got slough from the road and cracks aren't
9 straight, so the cracks are obviously much deeper and you can
10 see beyond there the other--where the cracks continue on.

11 Next one. This is the last one. Here you can see on the
12 side clearly how the road is sliding and moving up and down.
13 When you start running D8 cats, D8Hs up and down this road you
14 put great strain on it. They may want to think about using this
15 road as an access and you are increasing the--even pedestrian--I
16 mean regular residential traffic. That makes a big difference.
17 We have pretty light traffic and the--the one last thing was
18 that the traffic count is available at the Public Works
19 Department and it's nothing like what's stated in the EIR. It's
20 going to double our traffic even if it's just cars. [If this is
21 something] the County wants to get into. This blows out. It goes
22 down the creek, fills the creek up, we've got sewer running out
23 because we've got the sewer lines there. The creek, which is
24 running right now, fills up, because it drains from the [lower]
25 area, goes across the top of the fill and all that mud goes into
26 Capell Creek. And that's all I wanted to say with that. Maybe
27 they--maybe consider Highway 121 where you don't have those
28 problems. Thank you.

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1 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Thank you.

2 BOB WALLIN: I am Bob Wallin, a resident of Napa County
3 since 1969. And first of all, Mr. Morrison, I'd like to thank
4 you very much for this opportunity and this hearing and the
5 opportunity we have to communicate and to learn. I think this is
6 the very basis, and very necessary in a democratic society. We
7 all have--well first of all, realtors are usually strong
8 proponents of property rights and that is with the understanding
9 that it can be tempered with projects and developments that may
10 impact or threaten neighbors or the Napa community as a whole.

11 It is stated before. We all have responsibilities with
12 these property rights. I'll make this quick now because a lot of
13 the issues have already been handled and I'll defer that. I feel
14 neighbors in many of the communities of Napa County are rightly
15 very concerned. The fable of the goose that laid the golden egg
16 cannot be the story of our beautiful Napa County. We need to
17 exercise our responsibilities as good--as stewards and
18 conservationists. If not, Napa's idyllic environment will have a
19 very sad and tragic ending. When is enough enough?

20 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Marcus Cox, Glyn Rixon and Bruce
21 Blondin.

22 MARCUS COX: Hello. First of all I'd like to thank you,
23 Director Morrison, for having this meeting today and listening
24 to our thoughts. First thing I want to say is I live at 233
25 Country Club Lane in Circle Oaks, and we moved up there from
26 Silicon Valley. We were between stereo freeways of 680 and 880
27 and it was very very loud and Circle Oaks was just
28 breathtakingly silent. Just beautiful. Instead of the roar of

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1 the cars it was a roar of crickets, frogs and owls.

2 With this at risk it's very very concerning. And in talking
3 about the traffic, this is a--most of the things I was going to
4 talk about have already been covered, but this is a little more
5 detailed on the EIR. It indicates on page 4.7-4 that the project
6 traffic consultant has assumed existing traffic on Circle Oaks
7 Drive to 1,216 trips during eight hours, and that's based on an
8 ITE estimate of 152 peak hour trips.

9 How do they make that assumption? Twelve sixteen trips
10 would constitute almost one third of the daily traffic on
11 Highway 121, which has 4,000 trips per day. Twelve sixteen trips
12 would mean one trip per hour for every home in the Circle Oaks
13 community. Why doesn't their EIR data show that from an actual
14 traffic study done on Circle Oaks Drive?

15 The Napa County Public Works has a traffic count for Circle
16 Oaks Drive which is 722 one-way trips. That trip count is
17 available upon request at the Napa County Public Works, so all
18 you have to do is ask. Shouldn't the EIR be based on the actual
19 figures that are easily available?

20 And then the last question is why is Circle Oaks being used
21 to access the site, creating a major impact on a remote
22 community? It seems possible that they could access the site
23 directly off of 121. And everything else that I was going to
24 talk about has already been covered. Thank you.

25 GLYN RIXON: Good afternoon. I'm Glyn Rixon, 5310
26 Monticello Road. Thank you for holding this hearing today. Many
27 of my neighbors have already eloquently voiced their concerns
28 and opposition to this development and I stand with them. Most

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1 of the impact they fear is in regard to water drawdown and
2 construction degradation. But I also want to speak for those who
3 can't, the wild creatures that live alongside us in the Napa
4 Hills, and in particular, for the bee population, both managed
5 and feral.

6 I'm a beekeeper with a small apiary on my property on
7 Monticello Road across from and slightly north of the Walt
8 Ranch. I think by now most people know that our honeybees are
9 facing numerous serious challenges, diminishing their numbers
10 worldwide. We need to retain our wild lands for safe habitat and
11 forage for these and other wildlife species that each keep the
12 balance of nature in check.

13 The rampant ongoing strafing of vast hillsides, acreage in
14 our county, state and nation in favor of mono-cropping will be
15 our undoing. Grapevines do not depend on bees for pollination,
16 but more and more land is being taken for that use and the
17 native plants and trees are unceremoniously being ripped out in
18 their favor. Replanting a seedling in place of a long-
19 established madrone, oak, pine or manzanita is not responsible,
20 earth-friendly farming, simply an empty gesture in order to
21 advance a project such as this.

22 Many of us enjoy drinking wine, one of life's true
23 pleasures. But it is a luxury and not essential to our
24 existence. We seem to have forgotten that sufficient clean water
25 and sustainably grown food highly dependent on our pollination
26 is exactly that, essential.

27 I urge you to put a halt to Walt and other mega-vineyard
28 projects waiting for approval and work to rebalance our

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1 agricultural land use to be diverse and site appropriate. Thank
2 you.

3 BRUCE BLONDIN: Bruce Blondin, 5310 Monticello Road. I--we
4 built a house up on the hillside there in 1985 and we've gone
5 through water shortages, as well as occasionally we'd get a lot
6 of water. But the reality is in the last three to four years our
7 water table has dropped a great deal. So much so that this year,
8 and actually the last couple of years, a number of my neighbors
9 and including myself have had to have water trucked in. This is
10 not only just an expense, but it's very difficult for us and
11 we're real water conscious.

12 Almost everything that I had prepared to say has been
13 covered so I'll take it to this extent. To me this is like the
14 quick and the dead. Let's quickly have them get their permit.
15 The dead is many of us that live around the area and certainly
16 it will be just about that. It will kill off a lot of us that
17 are here in the area. So I hope that you will reconsider the
18 Walt Ranch project. Thank you.

19 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I have three cards left, so if anybody
20 else wants to speak, now is getting to be the time. The last
21 three: Kathleen Matthews, Tony Le Blanc and Claire Camp.

22 [Inaudible audience comment.]

23 KATHLEEN MATTHEWS: Hi. My name is Kathleen Matthews. We
24 live at 13 Juniper in Circle Oaks. By looking at the maps here
25 it looks like one of the vineyards will be like a hundred feet
26 from my home. So that should be pleasure. But what I'd like to
27 talk about is we moved up to Circle Oaks about four years ago.
28 We had been living up on--down on the valley floor for the last

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1 sixteen years next to a winery and vineyard. We watched this
2 winery and vineyard build not to their permit, build septic
3 tanks that were flying or spraying effluent over the vineyards
4 that polluted my neighbors' wells. They put a pipe in on
5 Memorial weekend at 5:30 in the morning, drilling a hole and
6 putting a pipe out to Highway 29 drainage to get rid of their
7 vineyard waste in front of my Bed and Breakfast.

8 Now I went to the County. Many people went to the County.
9 Many, many times. This business has never been stopped. In fact
10 they've just gotten another approval for something that is
11 against their permit. How this continues to happen in Napa
12 County I have no idea. I was so excited with the new
13 restrictions, the river set--and creek setback, the restrictions
14 on building on primary and secondary ridgelines, watching the
15 vineyards going up nothing over a 30 percent--and then I see the
16 development proposed for Yountville Hill, which was right across
17 the street from my--it goes against every single one of those
18 new guidelines by the County.

19 And I just--I have to say I'm scared. I'm really scared. I
20 mean, water is almost gone. Nobody's talking about global
21 warming. Nobody's talking about all the people down line. You're
22 just narrowly looking at this one project and I think you really
23 do need to take a look at how it's going to affect the whole
24 valley. There's got to be a better place for them to put
25 vineyards. Thank you.

26 TONY LE BLANC: Director Morrison. Thank you. Three quick
27 points. There's been plenty said I think. I'm amazed at this
28 really concentrated turnout of opposition to this project, but

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1 I'm also amazed that this whole process was created outside the
2 established criteria for approval or for discourse. And I feel
3 it represents a really troublesome example where agricultural
4 use of land is subjected to an ever-moving target for approval.

5 Secondly, the Napa Valley General Plan is not old. It's
6 quite recent. It was well debated with industry, citizens, and
7 legal and scientific advisors and I believe that the growth that
8 was estimated in that plan is consistent or perhaps even less
9 than what the actual development and growth for the valley has
10 been since then and can't really understand how--it's--such a
11 robust plan can be so easily dismissed.

12 Lastly, I'm just very concerned that the right to farm is
13 taken so lightly by residences and residents in preserved Ag
14 land. That's all. Thank you very much.

15 CLAIRES CAMP: Good afternoon Mr. Morrison and Kelli Cahill.
16 I've been here for 82 years. I live at 4964 Monticello Road and
17 my name is Claire Camp. I would like to end the comment period
18 on a positive, lighter, uplifting note.

19 From the creator of a classic, Shel Silverstein has written
20 the Giving Tree, an inspirational winner. If you have not read
21 or heard of it, read it. Read it again and again. I have read it
22 to my own classes for--over a hundred times. I truly--it truly
23 sends a message to both the young and old at heart. It may
24 enkindle your heart, I know it has enkindled mine. Thank you.
25 And this is the book.

26 DIRECTOR MORRISON: I have received two more comment cards.
27 We have two more speakers who wish to talk this afternoon. Lisa
28 Evans and Robert McLeish.

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1 LISA EVANS: Hello and thank you for giving me the chance
2 to speak. I didn't write anything because I did not picture
3 myself up here at all. I just wanted to let the Board know, and
4 I don't know if this is information that you have, but the
5 reason also why Circle Oaks is so concerned about our water is
6 that several years ago, the fire department, as well as the
7 water, or the Napa department, gave a huge--God, I'm not good at
8 this--okay, gave a very large--500,000-dollar--against the
9 height--for up in the highlands for polluting the water in
10 Berryessa and we took it upon ourselves as the association of
11 Circle Oaks to redo our water system. And at the cost of 10,000
12 dollars per lot, we have had our--they tacked it onto our
13 mortgages, so our mortgages have gone up, so that we would be
14 able to be responsible--and with the containment of water and
15 Hill--or Hall has said that they wanted--that it was originally
16 their land and they gave it to us and so on and so forth, but
17 they didn't give it to us. We paid a lot of money into this and
18 we're still to this day paying for a water system and for them
19 to want to come in now and drill right next to a new water
20 system to affect our old water system, this is just unheard of
21 to me and why then is it that we as a small community had to do
22 this charge all by ourselves if they're going to come in and
23 reap the benefits of taking our water when it cost us 10,000
24 dollars per household to--with--you know.

25 That's all I have to say besides that I'm really upset
26 about the animals. If I lose my foxes I'm really going to be
27 angry. The down--and people that live in Circle Oaks know that
28 down at the end of the hill is a pond. We used to have a

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1 beautiful breeding pair of eagles across that pond, that--and
2 nest is--has been empty for the last two years because as we all
3 know there is no water in the pond. The frogs aren't making
4 their noises, and, you know, the animals have to go to other
5 places, which cost us yet more water because we put little wells
6 out so that the deer and the turkey and the fox, and at night
7 the coyotes, and anything else that wants to come around and
8 drink water because there is no water in Circle Oaks for them to
9 drink anymore. I'd like to have my eagles back. I would hate to
10 see my foxes leave. Thank you very much.

11 ROBERT MCLEISH: 295 Country Club Lane. I just want to get
12 a couple topics that weren't covered on the public comment that
13 I haven't written about. Number one is the state threshold for
14 nuisance dust is 25 miles per hour.

15 Anybody who lives in Circle Oaks or drives Highway 121
16 knows that from [June-uary] until August, maybe into September,
17 our temperatures are different from Napa and our weather is more
18 like it tends towards Vacaville. It's a little warmer. When the
19 fall comes in, the cold air of Napa meets the warmer air that we
20 have and we create that turbulence. That turbulence easily
21 excesses [sic] 25 miles per hour. You notice that as you go up
22 Monticello grade on your way into Napa and you'll see it if you
23 go to the top of Circle Oaks up there on Ridgecrest Drive.
24 That's turbulent and it stays turbulent all day. Maybe it
25 subsides by three. If it's a nuisance, threshold is 25 miles per
26 hour for dust. Who is going to regulate that? Who is going to
27 stop all that construction every day until August? They are not
28 going to stop. Okay. Enough on that point. That's my question.

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1 How are you going to regulate that. It happens. I've been up
2 here 27 years.

3 Number two, I brought this up last week's meeting, Thursday
4 evening, I didn't get a really good answer for it. In the EIR it
5 talks about water drawdown. The June test, when the groundwater
6 is at its highest, they do their water tests. Well number three
7 was drawn down and did not recover. That's on the Walt property,
8 well number three. It didn't recover in September when they had
9 checked it. And in the EIR it says it did not ever reach pre-
10 test conditions. That says a lot to me about the water there.

11 I've got two more points. This many people, this kind of
12 response, I don't know any of these people except for what
13 brought us together here. We're all pretty reclusive. We all saw
14 something very wrong. We're not all crazy. And I like the sound
15 of the Hall wildlife sanctuary. Thank you.

16 DIRECTOR MORRISON: Last call? All right. I thank everyone
17 for participating. You were all very civil and very polite
18 group. I appreciate that very much.

19 We'll be taking all these comments, as well as all the
20 written comments we've received to date and will continue to
21 receive through the end of next week. And we'll be responding to
22 each of them in the Final EIR, which will be available as soon
23 as we can plough through the many many comments that we are
24 looking at.

25 Certainly everybody who has already within the noticing
26 period, I'm sorry, within the noticing radius or who has asked
27 to be put on our mailing list as an interested party will be
28 notified when the Final Environmental Impact Report is ready and

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1 will also be notified when the Public Hearing on the decision
2 will be scheduled.

3 Again, thank you very much and have a good evening.

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1 I, Kathryn F. Johnson, do hereby certify and believe:

2 That the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcript
3 of the proceedings before the Napa County Planning, Building &
4 Environmental Services Department, Napa, California, excepting
5 words noted "inaudible" or words placed in [brackets] to the
6 best of my ability. Speech disfluencies, discourse markers and
7 pause fillers have been deleted, except when deemed function
8 words. Commas may be used for emphasis as well as for grammar.

9 I further certify that I am not interested in the outcome
10 of said matter or connected with or related to any of the
11 parties of said matter or to their respective counsel.

12 Dated this 26th day of November, 2014.

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15 Kathryn F. Johnson
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