



Formal Public Comment Regarding Proposed HO Overlay and Rezoning at 2752 Coloma Street

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To: "ckendrick@cityofplacerville.org" <ckendrick@cityofplacerville.org>

Dear Ms. Kendrick,

I am writing to formally express serious concerns regarding the proposed Housing Opportunity (HO) Overlay and rezoning project at 2752 Coloma Street.

As a nearby resident who has lived in the area for several years, I have continuously and directly observed the environmental, wildlife, drainage, and traffic conditions surrounding the project site over an extended period of time. Based on these long-term observations, I strongly believe that the environmental impacts of this project have not been adequately evaluated under the current Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), and that a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary prior to any approval or rezoning decision.

The project area currently functions as a significant undeveloped natural habitat containing mature vegetation, substantial tree coverage, and apparent seasonal wetland characteristics. The site consistently supports extensive wildlife activity, including a large and highly noticeable amphibian population. For most of the year, with the exception of the hottest summer months and the final part of spring, frog and amphibian activity is continuously audible throughout the surrounding area, often at very substantial levels. The intensity, duration, and consistency of this amphibian presence strongly suggest the existence of sensitive biological and hydrological conditions that warrant formal professional investigation.

In addition, the property regularly supports multiple groups of deer that actively move through and utilize the area as part of a broader local habitat corridor. It is common to observe several deer families in the immediate area, sometimes consisting of approximately 5 to 10 or more animals at a time. Raccoons and other native wildlife species are also regularly present. The combination of undeveloped open land, mature vegetation, seasonal moisture conditions, and ongoing wildlife activity indicates that the site serves an important ecological function within the surrounding environment despite being privately owned.

The site also appears to contain persistent saturated soil conditions, standing or slow-moving water during portions of the year, and other features commonly associated with seasonal wetlands, drainage channels, groundwater emergence, or wetland-type habitat conditions. These observable environmental characteristics raise substantial concerns regarding:

- seasonal wetlands and hydrology,
- amphibian and wildlife habitat disruption,
- drainage and runoff impacts,
- groundwater retention and flow patterns,
- erosion and sediment concerns,
- loss of mature trees and vegetation,
- and cumulative ecosystem impacts.

Given these conditions, it is difficult to understand how a Mitigated Negative Declaration alone could adequately evaluate the full biological, hydrological, drainage, and habitat impacts associated with dense multi-family development on this site.

At minimum, the City should require:

- a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR),
- comprehensive biological surveys,
- formal wetland delineation,
- hydrology and drainage studies,
- amphibian and wildlife habitat assessments,
- arborist and oak preservation analysis,
- cumulative environmental impact review,
- and independent traffic and wildfire evacuation studies.

I am also deeply concerned about transportation and public safety impacts associated with the proposed density increase. Highway 49 and surrounding roadways already experience significant congestion during commuting hours and serve as a critical regional transportation and evacuation corridor. The addition of a dense apartment complex of up to 67 residential units would place substantial additional strain on infrastructure that is already heavily impacted.

Particularly concerning are:

- increased traffic congestion,
- reduced emergency response access,
- wildfire evacuation limitations,
- pedestrian and vehicle safety risks,
- and cumulative impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The project area is located within a region that faces significant wildfire risk concerns, and Highway 49 functions as an important evacuation corridor during emergency events. Any substantial increase in residential density should therefore be subject to particularly careful analysis regarding evacuation capacity, emergency access, and cumulative public safety impacts under wildfire conditions.

The observable environmental conditions present at and around the site appear substantial enough that a more comprehensive and independently rigorous environmental review process is warranted in order to ensure that all potential impacts are properly evaluated under CEQA.

Many of these conditions are readily apparent through ordinary long-term observation by nearby residents and appear difficult to fully reconcile with a determination that the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts beyond those addressed through limited mitigation measures.

Under these circumstances, a more comprehensive, transparent, and scientifically rigorous environmental review process is not only appropriate, but necessary to preserve public confidence in the integrity and reliability of the City's environmental review obligations under CEQA.

Given the environmental sensitivity of the site and the existing infrastructure limitations in the area, a deeper and more scientifically rigorous review process is clearly warranted before any rezoning or development approvals are considered.

I respectfully request that these comments be included in the official administrative record for this project and fully considered during all future hearings and environmental review proceedings.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vasily Tarasov

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