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September 14, 2004

Nathan Galambos
Napa County Public Works Department
1195 Third Street, Second Floor
Napa, CA 94559

Re: Oakford Winery Road Exception
Project Number 2003048

Dear Mr. Galambos:

We are in receipt of your letter dated August 13, 2004 in which you identified improvements that the Public Works Department will require along the access road to the property from Oakville Grade Road. We concur with your assessment on the majority of the roadway, however, we feel there is a potential that some of the requested improvements will have a significant impact on trees and slopes in two specific areas. These areas include the stretch between Oakville Grade Road and roadway station 14+00 and between roadway stations 37+00 and 39+00. We are requesting you reconsider the requested improvements within these reaches of the roadway.

Oakville Grade Road to Roadway Station 14+00

An analysis of the existing slope along the east side of the road indicates that the slope varies from 15% at a minimum to a maximum of over 50%. This slope also contains numerous native oak trees. Any placement of fill on this slope would result in the removal or death of the existing oak trees. Since the down slope is relatively steep, any fill placement results in significant construction outside of the existing roadway easement.

An analysis of the existing slope along the west side of the road indicates that the slope varies from 15% minimum to a maximum of 50%. There is a section between roadway stations 11+50 to 12+50 where the slope exceeds 50%. If the road was widened to the east only, cut slopes would extend to a point where they would interfere with the road right of way for Oakville Grade. In addition, cut slopes would be very tall (up to 13 feet) and would result in significant visual impacts from Oakville Grade, as well as the potential for severe erosion.

After review of the site, it was determined that the best case design solution is to construct portions of the widening on both the east and west sides of the roadway (splitting the improvements on each side of the existing roadway). The design is delineated on the attached roadway exception exhibit drawing, RE2. Even with this approach, the impacts remain significant, as follows:

- Tree removal: A total of 38 trees will be removed or destroyed with 37 of those being native oaks.

- Visual: A cut slope of up to 10 feet in height and 260 feet in length will be visible from Oakville Grade.
- Erosion: A total of 8400 square feet of 2:1 fill and cut surface area will be constructed, with the cut areas to be located at the base of existing steep slopes.

Even as designed, the requested improvements cannot be constructed entirely within the existing roadway easement. It should be noted that this stretch of roadway is essentially straight and has a clear unobstructed line of sight from Oakville Grade Road to the pullout proposed at station 19+50. The requested improvements provide limited increase in utility of the existing road section, despite significant degradation of the surrounding environment.

Roadway Station 37-00 to Station 39+00

An analysis of the existing slopes along this section of the roadway indicates slopes exceeding 50% along both sides of the roadway. There appears to be an existing shoulder along the east side of the roadway within this reach that can be utilized with expansion to the travel way along the west side of the road (the slopes adjacent to the roadway currently exceed 100% therefore, the revised exhibit does not encroach into this area). With the existing slopes exceeding 50% it would be difficult to daylight the cut slope within the existing easement. As depicted on the revised exhibit the catch points for the fill slope, along the west side of the roadway, extend into the vineyard road beyond the easement line. The construction of the cut slope would impact 11 trees (8 bayes and 3 buckeyes) varying from 6" to 10" in diameter.


The neighbors and those that use the existing road appreciate and value the rural character of the road as it currently exists and are not in favor of making the improvements requested. Oakford Vineyards has worked extensively with the neighbors to develop support for those requested improvements that will increase the safety and utility of the roadway.

Road safety is important to Oakford Vineyards as well as all those that use the roadway. Please note that Oakford Vineyards has worked with CDF closely from early in the project to define and address emergency vehicle access and fire safety issues. CDF and Public Works representatives have visited the site on several occasions to review road access conditions.

In order to provide additional mitigation, Oakford Vineyards proposes to install an additional turnout to be located at approximately Station 13+00 on the West side of the road. In spite of the excellent site distance, this additional turnout would provide the opportunity for vehicle pullout immediately after leaving the Oakville Grade intersection, in the event of oncoming traffic.

In light of the information provided above we request you reconsider the extents of improvements requested in your letter.

Sincerely,



Greg Swaffar, P.E.
PRESIDENT

cc: Donna Oldford