



Agenda Date: 5/8/2007
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NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Howard Siegel for Watt, Nancy - County Executive Officer
Community Partnership Program
REPORT BY: Howard Siegel, Community Partnership Manager, 253-4621
SUBJECT: Discussion and possible action related to CIRS Study regarding Demand for Farm Worker Housing

RECOMMENDATION

Community Partnership Manager requests discussion and acceptance of report on An Assessment of the Demand for Hired Farm Worker Housing in Napa County developed by the California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of the litigation filed by affordable housing advocates in July 2003 - and the subsequent Settlement Agreement of June 2004 - the County committed to undertaking a needs assessment to better understand the nature and extent of the need for farm worker housing in Napa County. In late 2005, California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) was selected to perform this assessment, which included interviews with farm workers, their employers and other industry representatives. Today's requested action is to accept the report and discuss its conclusions.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the litigation filed by affordable housing advocates in July 2003, the DeHaro Settlement Agreement required an updated, comprehensive study of the housing needs of local farmworkers, including both seasonal and permanent, single and those with families. The most recent such study that had been done locally was one commissioned by the Napa Valley Housing Authority (NVHA) in 2000, by Dr. Phillip Martin of UC Davis.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was prepared and released in the September of 2005, with input from a subcommittee of the County's Farm Worker Housing Oversight Committee, representatives of whom were included on the selection panel, along with a representative of the plaintiffs (California Rural Legal Assistance) who initiated the litigation. Three proposals were received and California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS) - a Davis-based firm with experience in this area - was selected to conduct this assessment and produce a report.

The assessment was conducted during the period from October 2005 through February 2007 and included a survey of 158 agricultural employers, personal interviews with 200 farmworkers (during 2006 harvest), key informant interviews with 20 individuals familiar with the housing needs of farmworkers in the County, farmworkers focus groups, and review and analysis of relevant documents.

Some of the key findings included a quantification of how many farmworkers there are in Napa County, including the nature and duration of their employment; where most of those workers tended to live while here in Napa County and the extent to which they were accompanied by other family members (in the case of migrant, seasonal workers), along with their reasons for utilizing the publicly-operated farmworker centers (or not).

These findings included an estimate of nearly 7,000 farm workers in Napa County (as of 2005), of whom about 65% reported permanent residency here. Of those who did not, only about 5% lived in a labor camp or public farm worker housing center, with most living in rented apartments or houses in the cities of Napa County.

It was found that the two primary reasons for not staying in the farm worker centers were first, that the workers had found other housing solutions while working in Napa (46%) and second, a lack of awareness of the existence of the farm worker centers (23%).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . CIRS Needs Assessment

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Karen Gratton