

*Bringing you HOPE -*  
**Helping Our Peninsula's Environment**

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Media Release February 2, 2007  
Information: call David Dilworth 624-6500

**HOPE Sues Monterey County to Protect our Water, our roads,  
our Imperiled Monterey Pine Forest and other vital natural habitats  
for local animals which would be destroyed by the new General Plan**

HOPE filed suit today to protect our community from the County's new General Plan approved on January 3. By filing this suit HOPE intends to protect our water supplies from massive additional overpumping, to stop a dramatic worsening of our existing gridlock, and to protect the 68 animal and flower species and the wild habitats they desperately need to keep from going extinct.

HOPE attorney Alexander Henson said "Some may ask 'Why sue - when we may vote it down?' The reason is that **neither the Board nor the public has the information yet to make an informed vote.** The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) does not reveal the harm the Plan causes - the environmental impacts it is currently hiding. So the voters will not have adequate information to make an informed vote, because key issues have never been analyzed and disclosed for the public."

David Dilworth, HOPE's Executive Director said "Even if the voters turn down the county's General Plan, the **Supervisors could bring back the identical General Plan in a year**, use the grossly inadequate EIR and approve it again in a flash - obliterating the public vote. Our suit intends to force the County to reveal the genuine impacts of their pre-meditated decision and get rid of that failed EIR."

HOPE Trustee Vienna Merritt-Moore said "The General Plan ignores severe harms to our community, ignored many imperiled animals and it ignores the will of voters by failing to address creating a carrying capacity for our community." She added "The Supervisors claim they might vote Tuesday to suspend the General Plan until after the June vote, but sadly, the Supervisors have taught us that we cannot trust them to do the right thing and they may not vote to suspend it. In any case the General Plan goes into effect tomorrow **and our deadline for filing the suit is today.** And finally, our suit should suspend the growth and other harm from the General Plan until after the case is decided."

The new General Plan project specifically allows thousands and **thousands of new mansions** yet barely makes a nod to the bare minimum of affordable housing. It would **hasten water rationing** throughout our county and further dewater our Carmel River and Salinas River by thousands of acre feet of water every year - including drought years - killing protected steelhead and Mark Twain's celebrated red-legged frogs. It would worsen county traffic by **tens of thousands of cars a day**, and would allow destruction of entire square miles of precious and rare **Monterey pine habitat** and the protection it gives to the lovely and endangered Rein **Orchid.**

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HOPE has participated in dozens of General Plan Update meetings since 1998 and written more than any other entity on the County's General Plan Update by submitting more than a thousand pages of the best available science. For more information see: [www.1hope.org/current.htm](http://www.1hope.org/current.htm)

Founded in 1998, and known for helping with hundreds of environmental and democracy successes, *H.O.P.E.* is a non-profit, tax deductible, public interest group protecting our Monterey Peninsula's natural land, air, and water ecosystems and public participation in government, using science, law, education, news alerts and advocacy.

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