

LETTER BP

FRIENDS OF UC MERCED
"A Collaborative Effort to Bring Change to the Central Valley"

OCT -1 200

September 23, 2001

To: Merced County University Community EIR
Attention: Bob Smith
Director, Planning
U.C. Development Office
3351 M Street, Suite 240
Merced, Ca 95348

From: Friends of U.C. Merced
Lee R Boese Jr. DDS Lee R Boese Jr.

RE: Campus EIR & U.C.P.

Friends of U.C. Merced support the EIR & U.C.P. in regards to economic growth, scholarships and land use within the Lake Yosemite site and planned community on the Flying M Ranch. We also believe that only this U.C.P. can meet the 12 objectives of the project as stated on section 5-2.

BP-1

Moreover, the U.C.P. realizes that the economic success of the central valley depends on the degree, which the local economy continues to add complementary industries to our agricultural base. In Chapter 6 six of the EIR it states, "an EIR must discuss the way in which a proposed project could foster economic growth." This proposed U.C.P. promotes diversification of the valley economy which is essential not only from the point of view of raising per-capita incomes, but also from the perspective of reducing the vulnerabilities inherent in a solely agricultural economy.

According to the year 2000 New Economy forecasting, Merced County is ranked 16th out of 18 counties in the state of California for the highest unemployment. In January of 2001 Merced's unemployment rate hit 17.6% ranking it 331 out of 331 or dead last for the highest unemployment of any metropolitan area. These numbers are according to the federal bureau of labor statistics. Interestingly, during the great depression of the 1920's Unemployment numbers were very similar to those of Merced County.

BP-2

Conversely, according to those same statistics Yolo County which is the home of U.C. Davis has an unemployment rate of 4.4% and is relatively prosperous. Moreover, Davis is also becoming a technology center. When looking at the Yolo county statistics prosperity is highly correlated with educational attainment.

Friends of U.C. Merced believe that the Lake Yosemite site, as stated in chapter six of the EIR will serve as a long-term economic development catalyst, inducing growth that may not have otherwise occurred.

Another objective of the U.C.P. on Section 5-2 goal number eight states, "To support the educational goals of the Virginia Smith Trust by maximizing enhancement of its scholarship fund." Only property on VST land will be able to satisfy this goal. Moreover, through the generous help of the Packard foundation, a direct contribution of several million dollars will be made to the Smith Trust. This educational endowment will benefit Merced County students wishing to attend college. More importantly, proceeds from the VST will continue to be invested in land for the planned community, with the proceeds going to student scholarships. The projected future value of this land in thirty to fifty years will have an enormous value. Again, only land on the VST has this potential, while also meeting objective number eight of the U.C.P.

BP-3

Another of the objectives that the U.C.P. meets is on section 5-2 stated in numbers 3, 4 and 9. Number 3 proposes, "To provide a community that can be developed in an integrated fashion through a master plan, rather than fragmented growth." Goal number 4 on section 5-2 states, " To provide a community with patterns of land use and urban form that support the principles of a livable communities and environmental sustainability." Goal number 9 states, " Support of regional programs to conserve and protect the Counties important agricultural and natural resources as development of U.C. Merced and the University community proceed." This EIR & U.C.P. meets the objectives above by phasing in the community so that the more productive agricultural land will not be developed for 25 to 30 years. In addition permanent agricultural easements will be required to offset any agricultural lands lost to urbanization.

BP-4

Friends of U.C. Merced believes that overall, this EIR & U.C.P. represents the most acceptable compromise because it balances the needs of the environment, the economics of the valley and the education of the most valuable species of all, the children of the San Joaquin Valley.

BP-5

The environment wins because 65,000 acres in vernal pool habitat will be preserved forever, while maintaining vital agricultural land. The valley economy wins because a world -class 21st century campus will take advantage of the valleys tremendous diversity and empower its people with jobs. And the valley's students win, because they will have access and exposure to a world - wide university in their own backyard. Approving this EIR, will foster an educational passion that can raise the standards in the entire Central Valley.

**COMMENT LETTER BP: LEE R. BOESE JR., D.D.S.
FRIEND OF UC MERCED**

Response to Comment BP-1:

The comment's support of the project is hereby forwarded to the decision makers.

Response to Comment BP-2:

The comment reiterates support of the project and notes that developing a campus and a community in Merced will help to diversify the economy. As discussed in Master Response 1, the UCP is intended to accommodate the growth induced by the Campus.

Response to Comment BP-3:

The comment reiterates and supports Objective 8 of the UCP, stating that funds from the Virginia Smith Trust and the Packard Foundation will benefit students in Merced County. The comment is hereby forwarded to the decision makers.

Response to Comment BP-4:

The comment reiterates and supports Objectives 3, 4, and 9 of the UCP. The comment is hereby forwarded to the decision makers.

Response to Comment BP-5:

The comment's support of the Campus and UCP is hereby forwarded to the decision makers.