

**From:** Marilyn Bardet <mjbardet@comcast.net>  
**To:** <pbs@mendocinocounty.org>  
**CC:** <davisv@mendocinocounty.org>  
**Date:** 12/21/2017 11:25 AM  
**Subject:** re-submitted "clean" version MARILYN BARDET- COMMENT LETTER ON IS/MND for "Collective Hotels and Retreats" Project, U\_2017-0009, for Pine Mountain property owned by BENDAN LLC  
**Attachments:** BARDETComment Letr re\_U\_2017-0009.Mendocino Planning Comm.12.20.17.pdf; Part.002

Dear Department of Planning and Building Services of Mendocino County,

Yesterday I'd submitted my Comment Letter to you regarding the proposed Project, U-2017-0009, having spent over 30 hours, writing it in short order, because I'd only learned about the comment period on December 18th when I'd called my cousin, Kate Schafer, to wish her Merry Christmas. Kate and her husband Roger own the 36 acre property that lies immediately adjacent and to the west of the parcel proposed for development by "Collective Hotels and Retreats Inc."

Hearing about the Project and the distress Kate was feeling, I asked her to send me the County's IS/MND on the Project so that I could understand what was proposed and how it was being presented under CEQA, particularly concerned to know how the County of Mendocino as Lead Agency had assessed the Environmental Checklist.

As I explained in my Comment Letter, it happens that, as 30 year local resident and homeowner in Benicia, I've had considerable experience reading, reviewing and commenting on IS/MNDs and also EIRS for various large-scale development projects of all kinds.

Because I had to drop everything and read the IS/MND as thoroughly as I could under pressure, there was no time, after I wrote my comments straight out, I had no time left to do necessary editing for formatting (big spatial gaps and pagination problem), spelling and grammar errors, etc. Having had a good night's sleep last night, I decided this morning that I would re-read my comments to edit those errors and resubmit the "cleaner" version for your public record. I have not changed any content of my original submission.

Could you please accept this edited copy of my Comment Letter and substitute it for my original? I'd appreciate it very much if the Planning Commissioners could be given the edited copy attached here. Again, there is no change (deletion or addition) to the actual comments I'd originally submitted. The date of the edited version of my letter remains Dec 20th.



MARILYN J. BARDET  
333 East K Street, Benicia CA 94510  
707-745-9094 [mjbardet@comcast.net](mailto:mjbardet@comcast.net)

December 20, 2017

County of Mendocino/Planning Commission  
Department of Planning and Building Services  
860 North Bush Street  
Ukiah, CA 95482

**SUBJECT: COMMENT LETTER** (sent via pdf, Dec 20th before 4 pm)  
**REJECTING adoption of proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration ["M-Neg Dec" or "IS/MND" ]that supports Applicant, Collective Hotels and Retreats Inc., for Major Use Permit to build "Resort and Recreational Facility" ["Project"] on Pine Mountain in Mendocino County, Case # U\_2017-0009**

Dear Planning Commissioners of Mendocino County,

This letter offers my comments on the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration ["IS/MND"] recommended by county planners for adoption and award of a Major Use Permit for a proposed Project described as "temporary", and generically characterized as a "Resort and Recreational Facility." The Applicant, Collective Hotels and Retreats, Inc., of Boulder, CO, proposes that the Project is to be constructed and operational year-round on a 39 acre parcel, zoned RL-160 located on Pine Mountain, in Mendocino County, a parcel owned by BENDAN LLC of Sausalito CA.

My credentials and experience relevant to the submission of my comments are attached at the end of this letter.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

For the sake of current and future generations, I offer my letter especially in respect for Mendocino County's magnificent, mostly rural and scenic natural environs, which I've visited often since childhood, and where I've greatly enjoyed vacationing, especially along the coast as well as inland. Over decades, I've attended conferences and festivals in Willits and Hopland and have stayed in the towns of Mendocino and Boonville. Most recently in October, one day before the horrific October fires broke out in the hills above Santa Rosa, I was driving south from

Mendocino on 128 to Anderson Valley's Philo and Boonville, where my friends and I had previously spent two nights, and then continued to Cloverdale onward to Santa Rosa. Looking back upon that drive, I had basically followed the fire's conflagration route down Hiway 12 and home, where a few days later, the Napa fire had spread over the hills eastward into Solano County, only 15 miles from Benicia where I live. Close friends were evacuated who rent a home near Boyes Hot Springs in Sonoma County off Hiway 12. A cousin and his wife lost their home in Santa Rosa. Two other families I know nearly lost their homes in Santa Rosa and had to be evacuated. (Specific comments about fire danger of permitting the Project are below). I have friends in Ventura County who have been witnessing the spread of devastating fires in their area.

Particularly and personally relevant to this review, I've visited Cloverdale where my uncle Jim Selby and his wife have lived for years. I've also been on Pine Mountain, up three miles on Pine Mountain Rd, to visit my first cousin, Kate (Selby) Schafer, who I've known since her birth, and who, with her husband Roger, has happily and productively lived, worked and farmed for the past 10 years on their 36 acre property located near the top of Pine Mountain. I've enjoyed their house's incredible vistas from their deck and pool area that overlook the rugged rural beauty of the mountain's steep-sloped oak woodlands and beyond to the valley miles below, and toured their farmed land – including a pond, well-tended vegetable gardens, olive orchard and vineyard they had planted, maintain and harvest, making their own "Pine Mountain" wine.

It happens that I only lately learned this week, having called my cousin for the holidays, that their property lies immediately adjacent to the 39 acre parcel slated for development by Collective Hotels and Retreats, Inc.

I know my cousin, Kate Schafer, to be a devoted mother and also a responsible, successful entrepreneur and managing partner, for 25+ years, for an innovative med-tech firm, and after leaving that company when it was sold, as creator and owner of a start-up personal consulting service within the medical field, allowing her to work from their home on Pine Mountain. Kate is also much more than a hobbyist as an avid, passionate gardener and organic farmer.

To my knowledge, Kate has had no prior experience reading Initial Studies, EIRs or any other such planning documents; yet she has devotedly researched and commented on this Project in short order within 21 days, rightly questioning the staff's premises and conclusions that support adoption of the IS/MND. I have read her impressive letter only yesterday, and wholly endorse her comments, and echo them here, for all the reasons she has given by her own research and judgment, which is foremost dependent upon her intimate knowledge of her surroundings and the environs of Pine Mountain as she has come to know and loved them.

Having read the IS/MND and reviewed the few maps submitted for this Project over the last 30 hours, I am deeply concerned that the totality of its potential impacts – including reasonably foreseeable cumulatively significant impacts that could result from the Project's implementation and operations – have remained unidentified, uncharacterized, inadequately described, glossed or dismissed. Such omissions undermine the public's ability to understand and fairly, objectively judge the Project's negative impacts and/or merits.

On such grounds alone, the Initial Study's presentation of the Project as minimally described and as assessed by the Environmental Checklist appears to be inadequate for judging the potential level of significance of Project impacts.

My recommendation is for the Planning Commission, *at the very least*, to delay the public hearing on the Project, given the errors, fatal flaws and omissions of the IS/MND, about which I will give examples below. Also, I am alert to the compressed time frame for the public comment period and public hearing, which have been squeezed together during December's holiday season. (See discussion of procedural matters below.)

As a matter of CEQA review protocols and procedure:

The scheduling of the 21-day comment period for December, with the public hearing to be conducted on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – less than 24 hours after the 4 pm deadline on the 20<sup>th</sup> for submission of public comments – obviously disadvantages concerned commenters, given that the time necessary for research to support informed comments is greatly limited in the first place to the minimum, especially at holiday time, including any time for preparing testimony for the hearing. In all, the comment period inclusive of the hearing will have consumed all the days of the holiday season for family Hanukkah and Christmas celebrations right up to the Christmas holiday weekend, thus utterly disadvantaging the public and stakeholders' family members concerned to submit comments and attend the hearing. The timing of the public review was determined by the Lead Agency.

Under CEQA, such disadvantaging of the public is not a minor procedural matter.

It is also highly doubtful that Commissioners receiving comment letters that have been submitted at the 4 pm deadline on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, (as this one will necessarily have to be submitted), will have sufficient time and opportunity to thoroughly read and study such comments when commissioners have been equally pressed to prepare for the hearing during the holidays. This,

too, signifies disadvantage to concerned commenters and stakeholders as well as for commissioners charged with fairly judging the IS/MND for its completeness and accuracy. Contrarily, the Applicant, "Collective Hotels and Retreats", based in Denver CO, and the property owner, BENDAN LLC of Sausalito, have had all the advantages of convenient timing that favors them in their preparation for the Initial Study and public hearing, given that their application was submitted on June 7, 2017. County Staff has had all summer and fall to review the application and prepare the IS/MND, as well as their presentation of the Project for the Commission's hearing.

In addition: it is my understanding that Kate and Roger Schafer were not advised by county staff of the Project and its impending CEQA review, until the first day of the comment period. Should the Project be permitted, the Schafers are potentially and foreseeably the most affected and aggrieved stakeholders. What prevented extension of that simple courtesy – of a call or other means of communication – to give the Schafers and other property owners on Pine Mountain a chance to learn about the existence of the Applicant's plan – a public document – well enough in advance of the onset of the comment period, to allow these key property owners adequate time for study and preparation on such a significant development proposal for their immediate environs?

Did the Applicant make any attempt to contact the Schafers to explain the Project and learn their particular concerns as related to their own property and the mountain's habitat, natural and aesthetic qualities? Was there any workshop held by the county to introduce the Project to county stakeholders? Except for officially required notification of a given CEQA comment period schedule, CEQA does not *require* other forms of communication and education around a project. However CEQA does not proscribe communication by those other means, for the sake of public understanding. On the contrary, CEQA encourages public understanding and active public participation in all aspects of a project's review as a principal reason for the law's existence.

#### **COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACTS AS RELATED TO CEQA GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING A PROJECT:**

I fully respect the privilege of CEQA, which allows for citizens to comment on major development projects being considered for permits that may potentially and significantly alter the physical environment of a project site and in doing so foreseeably impact not only surrounding lands, air, water, flora and fauna in their ecological habitat as they relate to a project's construction, build-out and eventual activities, but also may foreseeably and potentially

negatively affect people living and working in the immediate vicinity of a project site over the course of the project's life-span.

It is out of my respect and love for nature and its wildness – and for the hopeful realization in each of us of our interconnectedness within all of life – that I submit these comments, knowing that nature's once myriad resources are now fast depleting, that necessary ecological diversity is now under siege by massive numbers of extinctions, and that global climate change and CO2 buildup in the upper atmosphere affects every place on earth, including Pine Mountain.

The Initial Study's Environmental Checklist is meant to assess the level of significance of potential impacts that could foreseeably occur, as categorized under the array of required CEQA subject areas that must be addressed. CEQA subjects of concern relate to Aesthetics; Agriculture and Forestry Resources; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology & Soils; GHG Emissions; Hazards & Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use & Planning; Mineral Resources; Noise; Population & Housing; Public Services; Recreation; Transportation & Traffic; Tribal Cultural Resources; Utilities and Service Systems; Mandatory Findings of Significance.

Of the Initial Study's Environmental Checklist's findings of impacts and the determination of their significance level, there are:

- 0 findings of "potentially significant impact"
- 5 findings for "less than significant impact with mitigation"
- 55 findings for "less than significant impact", and finally,
- 33 findings for "no impact."

Adding 55 + 33, there are a total of 88 determinations for little or no impacts of significance, such that the Lead Agency has concluded that there would be no need for further study or further mitigation, thus to recommend to the Commission a vote for adoption of the IS/MND "as is", which would permit the Project.

How is this possible? What is wrong with this picture, given the predominantly rural character of Pine Mountain?

CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064, "Determining the Significance of the Environmental Effects Caused by a Project" offers the following in (b):

"The determination of whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment calls for careful judgment on the part of the public agency involved,

based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data. An ironclad definition of significant effect is not always possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting. For example, an activity which may not be significant in an urban area may be significant in a rural area."

For preliminary review of a Project via an Initial Study and Environmental Checklist, CEQA Guidelines (Section 15063) do not require depth analysis of potential impacts as are required for EIRs. However, CEQA does require that impact determinations outlined in an Initial Study's Checklist must be substantiated by evidence and factual information, enough to accurately represent the Project's physical environmental footprint, such that the Lead Agency could honestly recommend adoption of an IS/MND and permit, **OR** decide whether an EIR would be necessary to better describe and assess the full scope of the project, to enable more accurate evaluation and fair judgment of its merits and impacts, and for decision-makers' and the public's understanding of the extent of impacts of significance.

Contrary to the conclusions reached by the IS/MND's Environmental Checklist, I submit that the Project, if permitted, would *definitely and drastically alter* the 39 acre parcel, which historically until now has remained rural, rugged oak woodlands and native shrubs that provide habitat, nourishment and shelter for flora and fauna.

In this sense, an undeveloped rural parcel can never be described as "uninhabited", as the IS/MND describes it, unless nature – as life itself – is completely discounted. We humans are not the only potential would-be "occupiers" of rural wild lands slated for development. From my reading of the IS/MND, I found no current and specific evidence of "hands on" biological inquiry done in the field and/or recent field studies done within the last several years that would account for the various inhabitants of Pine Mountain in and around the Project site. Basically, a nod seems to have been given that historical records with the county would suffice to account for endangered species of plants, nesting birds and other such small creatures.

With regard to the Project's scope and intensity of development as described in the IS/MND that would alter the 39 acre Project site:

It is inconceivable that the Project, by any sensible and objective analysis, would have little or no impacts caused by construction, operation and activities that necessitate the following resort-equipped facilities: 18 "glam" tents on wooden platforms with individual bathrooms requiring leach fields and daily water supply; new service roads carved into the landscape and graveled; a 36-space gravel parking lot; an energy-intensive commercial kitchen, potentially using natural

gas (though the fuel source is not identified); energy-intensive refrigeration; large communal "special events" tent with lighting; two public restroom facilities, necessary for non-lodging guests attending special events; electrical supply for all tents and entertainment (amplified music); reliable potable water source available in all structures, with sewer infrastructure requiring leach fields; ample water storage capacity for fire suppression; and two 120 sq ft storage units for maintenance equipment needed regularly at the site; and finally, a mobile trailer of some sort for a permanent employee to live in as caretaker, security guard and presumably the general manager of the site. (this is a partial list).

Example of an omission: There is no description or characterization of the specific amenities that would be provided inside or outside the tents. I couldn't find in the IS/MND if there would be wood stoves and chandeliers installed in the tent units that are apparently typical features of "glamping" resorts, as I've sometimes seen featured in photos of such resorts in Sunset Magazine.

Kate Schafer's letter refers to her having visited the website for "Collective Hotels and Retreats, Inc." to find out more about the amenities provided in their "glamping" retreats located elsewhere in the country. Her letter alludes to "wood stoves" as being an interior feature of the tents. Although I did not search myself for her reference's source, I am concerned to know if, indeed, wood-burning stoves would be one of the amenities provided by the Project. If so, I share my cousin's concerns for the increase of fire danger, especially from hot embers leaving a stove pipe, and also, her concern for emissions of Particulate Matter (PM 10 and PM less than 2 microns) that would pollute the air and possibly waft up to degrade air quality in the vicinity of the Schafer's home and farm. Wood burning is a chief contributor to smog in the Bay Area and to increasing levels of chronic and acute respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis and asthma, as well as heart disease.

On that note regarding such concerns: CEQA does not assume that readers of an Initial Study or EIR should have to do further online research or research other materials outside of the documents provided by the Lead Agency. Sufficient documentation, whether in Appendices of an EIR or in an IS/MND, is to be provided to enable decision-makers and the public to learn about "the basics" of a project design, its features and effects.

Because of the limited description provided by the IS/MND of such amenities, basic questions arise relevant to evaluation of this Project's scope and extent and degree of impacts, especially regarding the provision for 15 special events per year.

For example: relevant to discussions of lighting and noise:

What type of lamps or light sources would be used inside the individual tents and the large communal "events" tent? What degree of illumination would be visible from the Schafer property or from Pine Mountain Road? Would guests be allowed to bring/use additional lamps, such as Colman lanterns fueled by flammable liquid? Would there be an outdoor fire pit fueled by wood or natural gas for use by lodgers at night?

What study of existing types of noises and their levels have been accounted for on Pine Mountain in the vicinity of the Project site to date? What are the projected noise levels from amplified music, which would be integral to wedding parties? If no studies have been done to support claims that noise levels would be within a normally acceptable decibel range allowable between certain hours as permitted by the county general plan, there is no reference to recent studies of how sounds travel on Pine Mountain, e.g., that could demonstrate how irritating and disturbing noise levels could be exaggerated under the conditions of topographical variances reflecting sound waves.

The Project calls for allowing up to 15 major "events" each year, including weddings, conferences, corporate meetings, etc. The Initial Study remarks that a plan for special events would be submitted *after* the first of such events. To my knowledge, plans such as the one suggested must be submitted for public review *before* final consideration for Project approval.

Example of concern relevant to evaluating effects on sensitive receptors, e.g. other humans and creatures living outside the Project footprint, and pertinent to assessing cumulatively significant impacts:

There is no projected model for scheduling an "outdoor wedding season", which typically runs in Northern California for most of three seasons of the year. Thus, by calculation, 15 major special events would not be evenly spread over a full year, but be concentrated in spring, summer and fall seasons, thereby filling more weekends with activities that disrupt the bucolic surrounding environs, not only for humans but for animals, great and small, within the vicinity.

With regard to land use changes for recreational activities:

The heavy environmental footprint of the "glamping" retreat/resort is well disguised by the scant descriptions offered by the IS/MND. The Project is not typical of any recreational state or

county campground that I know. The previously undeveloped property slated for year-round, exclusive resort-style "glamping" would absolutely intensify use of Pine Mountain for much more than passive recreation, such as found in state recreational parks for hikers, cyclists, bird watchers and for car-camping with minimal amenities. Yet it is not surprising that a "high end" resort facility – one with special luxury amenities – should have a "high cost" environmental footprint with foreseeable impacts, such as to soils, local hydrology, air quality, forest canopy and county services, as Kate Schafer's letter outlines and explains.

For example: there is no discussion of energy-saving elements planned as part of the Project design. From my reading of the IS/MND, there is no consideration of GHG emissions related to energy sources. Why is there no provision for solar energy generation, or a solar water heater? Would propane tanks be installed and utilized on site for fueling commercial kitchen stoves or for running a water heater? Which raises the question: what specific hazardous/flammable materials would be stored regularly on the Project site?

Prime example of a failure of the IS/MND's limited descriptions and analysis:

There is no updated information provided that accounts for the extended and chronic drought conditions in California and rising temperatures which are now serving to warn us of what our future in California will more certainly hold. We are told that fire is historically part California's landscape shaping its changes and survival. However, conditions now, especially given humans' push into what had been undeveloped rural land, have intensified and extended fires' fury. Driven by high winds and bone-dry drought conditions, recent raging fires that have ravaged Sonoma County and counties of the L.A. basin and Santa Barbara give proof that allowing increasing development involving urban infrastructure, (especially electrical, as well vehicles containing flammable liquid fuels), into places which were once natural wooded wild lands, mountains and canyons, represents a crisis of unprecedented proportion under extreme dry conditions, as we have recently experienced. Prospects for increasingly bigger fires is becoming California's "new normal." As we've learned, adverse wind conditions, such as high velocity "Santa Ana's" experienced as common in fall and winter months can extend fires in all directions, consuming urbanized areas. A small campfire, left untended, can cause similar conflagration under such conditions. No amount of water stored for fire suppression under "new normal" conditions—500 gallons of "onsite water storage" as stated in the IS/MND — could have stopped the fires we have witnessed the effects of over the last several months. The IS/MND does not address this basic fact.

With regard to public safety and public services providing such protections:

In the case of fire on Pine Mountain, CalFire's best bet to protect human life and safety is evacuation; but the only access road for the mountain's upper reaches where the Project site is located is Pine Mountain Rd, a dangerously narrow road that climbs upward of 3 miles and doesn't allow for passing. There is little comment in the IS/MND that addresses the viability of an evacuation plan that utilizes Pine Mountain Rd in its current state as the only road "out" of a natural fire zone. (See further comments on Pine Mountain Rd.) The IS/MND states (page 2) that "Fire protection standards will be implemented as required by Cal Fire". It also states: "Emergency Action Plan (EAP) – an EAP *will be prepared* [my emphasis] to address medical, fire and evacuation procedures, and receive CalFire approval." Unfortunately, no such updated plan has been submitted for public review by CalFire that would assure adequate public safety precautions and road maintenance, etc, in the event of a fire emergency, such as one of the magnitude we have just seen ravaging northern and southern CA counties. The IS/MND does not address the difficulties of evacuation via existing Pine Mountain Rd.

Further: With regard to traffic, transportation and public safety:

Transport to and from the Project site is an issue particularly needing more extensive impact analysis, as the comment letter submitted by Kate Schafer indicates. Further study should compare and evaluate traffic on Pine Mountain Road, at various times of day and seasons. Comparison and evaluation of normal versus intensified uses of the road would have to be accomplished by actual traffic observation and modeling of future traffic scenarios. These would have to account for foreseeable and significant increases in daily traffic from visitors and service providers coming and going to and from the Project's resort. This is one crucial and glaring example of "what's missing" from the IS/MND's assessments.

As previously discussed, the only existing road that gives access to both the Project site as well as the Schafer property is Pine Mountain Rd, which lies in Sonoma County. Driving up and down Pine Mountain Rd presents clear danger because of the topography – a real experience of hazard, as I've experienced and remember it, like anyone else unfamiliar with driving that particularly narrow, steep road. At its higher elevations, sections are unpaved. The road winds, twists and turns sharply upward or downward, around blind curves, with barely enough room for a single car or truck on certain sections nearing the top. There are few shoulders or turn-outs that I can remember, and little room anywhere for passing. Yet, this road would have to service the Project site. The amount of traffic that could be expected – whether during construction period or later as the resort becomes fully operational with special events for upwards of 150 guests and

as many as 36+ guests for overnight stays in 18 tents – raises a key issue, whose repercussions are not discussed in the IS/MND: the road would have to be serviced (surfaced!) more often and at greater cost than currently. It is of concern that Sonoma County has not (yet) commented on the Project, about which they were officially noticed. Their county's concern must be expected, given their responsibility for the road's maintenance and servicing under normal use and emergency circumstances, including fire and medical response.

With regard to "neighbors" in the vicinity of the Project site and their concerns for impacts affecting aesthetics, air quality, noise, water supply, hydrology and traffic:

It is remarkable in an age of computer drafting abilities that no drawings or sketches or simulation photos were provided by the Applicant that would demonstrate how the Project's various infrastructure components would (or would not) be seen or screened from the adjacent Schafer property and home. Why were there no images that would demonstrate efforts to shield "neighbors" for undesirable day and night-time views of the Project's facilities?

No field studies have been done that would demonstrate that hydrology (natural water flow) of the Project site's land surrounding Schafer's pond – a pond which the Schafers have indicated fills from natural spring water and run-off flowing to it, would not be disturbed by grading and other construction activities or new facilities uses, including pumping of natural spring water found on the Project site for daily uses of the resort.

No traffic studies have been done that would demonstrate that the Schafer's access to their property would not be impacted by traffic arising, especially during "special events" at the resort, when "guest traffic" as well as trucks servicing a wedding or other large-scale event could obstruct their use of Pine Mountain Road.

Air quality impacts that could be felt by the Schafers are currently unknowable, because the Applicant has avoided detailing descriptions of the actual potential amenities that would produce emissions of Particulate Matter (PM 10 and PM less than 2.5 microns) such as wood-burning stoves, gas or wood-fired outdoor fire pit, gas-fired kitchen stove. Also missing: traffic studies that would demonstrate traffic patterns and numbers of "vehicle miles traveled", which could account for GHG emissions as well as particulate emissions affecting human health. Kate Schafer has attempted to analyze scenarios that would potentially impact air quality on the mountain with regard public health, traffic and visibility.

Kate's and her family's concerns certainly point to the fact that in no sense could the Project as described be considered "temporary" as the IS/MND has qualified the Project's facilities and uses. The use of the term "temporary" represents a subterfuge aiming to diminish the profound affect on a rural property and its surroundings, (including critters, birds, insects and their habitats), by the level of development planned and intense "recreational" uses it would accommodate. The developer and property owner have not indicated a Project time-frame for the Project's existence. In EIRs, a description of the Project's scope and extent in time is required, thus discussion of the "life-time of the Project" as it may chronically, as well as acutely, affect sensitive receptors in the vicinity of a project site and its construction and development through time.

Regarding potential future development potential on Pine Mountain, suggestive of "cumulatively significant and reasonably foreseeable impacts" that could potentially result from permitting the current Project under review:

There can be no doubt that development of resorts of all sorts and levels of luxury is a trend in both Sonoma and Mendocino counties. When such new resorts are approved, others can follow that thus create a development synergy, often desired by cities and planners. However, with increasing scrutiny, the public and decision-makers must consider evaluations of such intensive development in terms of sustainability – for balancing and weighing economics, social and cultural and environmental costs and benefits of development. In the IS/MND for the "Recreation and Resort Facility", I encountered no mention of sustainability nor any ideas of how the Project would avoid "business as usual" whose environmental effects are by now well documented.

#### **IN SUMMARY:**

While I have run out of time to write or elaborate further on my comments, I am confident that I've given enough concrete examples of particular failures of the IS/MND to account for even basics of the Project and its potential impacts. I fully endorse the comments submitted by Kate Schafer and honor the kind of envisioning required to imagine what's not been accounted for by the Initial Study's Environmental Checklist. She took the time to estimate, from the few figures given about "new service roads" and "36-space graveled parking lot", just how much surface area would be covered by those service roads and a parking lot, and how much gravel, and therefore how many trucks to transport such amounts of gravel it would take, up and down Pine Mountain Road, to accomplish the development of road infrastructure alone. I salute her challenges to the IS/MND's conclusions.

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I am submitting my comments, having just learned, less than an hour ago, that the County has suddenly postponed the public hearing, which had been scheduled for tomorrow, Dec 21st at 9 a.m., until further notice. This was the absolute right thing to have done under CEQA for sake of decision-makers and the public. Thank you for your thoughtful decision!

Most respectfully,

Marilyn Bardet

(I will be happy to send an actual signed copy of this letter via snailmail)

\* \* \*

My credentials and experience that support my letter:

I am a 30 year resident and homeowner in Benicia, (Solano County), who has consistently and actively engaged in local and county land use issues. I have participated in many CEQA reviews and planning commission hearings on major development projects proposed in my city, since 1991, for industrial, commercial and residential uses, by such corporate developers as Koch Industries, Ford Motor, Valero Benicia Refinery, and Seeno. As well, I have participated actively as a resident on two contiguous 7-year hazardous waste site cleanup projects led by CALEPA and also the Army Corps of Engineers for DoD, the latter project involving investigation for eventual cleanup of live ordnance and military hazmat potentially remaining on 2,500 acres of the former Benicia Arsenal. I am therefore very familiar with CEQA issues surrounding land use as surveyed under initial studies' environmental checklists, as well as in more comprehensive EIRs, such as for major projects sited above. Commercial and residential projects under local review have involved areas of historically undeveloped, rural land, both within and outside of Benicia's Urban Growth Boundary. In the mid 90's, I served for 3 years on the City of Benicia's 17-member, council-appointed General Plan Oversight Committee, which was tasked to completely overhaul Benicia's outdated 1978 plan. The over-arching goal of our city's new plan, adopted in 1999, was sustainability, thus supporting sustainable economic development, environmental protection and social justice for support of community health and well-being. I also am a 17-year founding member of the Good Neighbor Steering Committee that serves as a watchdog on the Valero refinery pertinent to public safety as well as to air quality issues relevant to public health and community well-being. I have consistently addressed air quality issues at the level of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District on policy development for new rules governing refinery emissions that entail curbing Green House Gas emissions. I serve as chair of

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the board of an independent and growing non-profit, Sustainable Solano, which sprung from a fledgling Benicia Community Gardens non-profit for which I served as "board chair" since 2004. In all my activist work at local and regional levels, I have been committed to making a "world that works for everyone", a cleaner, healthier environment for all.

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