



Dear Commissioners,

March 26, 2025

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to address the growing housing challenges facing our business community and to express our strong support for efforts that responsibly expand housing opportunities across our region.

The Santa Maria Valley continues to experience steady economic growth, yet our members consistently cite limited housing availability as a major barrier to attracting and retaining employees. Businesses across every sector—agriculture, healthcare, education, aerospace, technology, and beyond—depend on a stable local workforce to succeed. The current housing shortage affects our region’s competitiveness and directly impacts the quality of life for our workforce.

That is why the Chamber supports the development of new housing projects—across all types and price points in all parts of our region. We do not advocate for individual housing developments, but we believe that all well-planned, appropriately located housing projects are part of the solution. The Richards Ranch proposal is one such project that aligns with this broader goal of addressing our housing shortfall through thoughtful, scalable development.

While we are not in a position to endorse any one project, we are also not opposed to annexation when it enables practical solutions to long-standing constraints—such as access to water resources, infrastructure, and coordinated regional planning. Infill parcels like the Richards Ranch site, surrounded by existing development and infrastructure, offer opportunities to build much-needed workforce housing while maximizing community benefit.

Projects that incorporate mixed-use design offer diverse housing types and provide supportive improvements—such as transportation infrastructure and school funding—contribute meaningfully to regional livability and economic vitality. When such projects are supported by collaborative agreements between jurisdictions, they demonstrate the type of partnership our region needs to effectively address housing supply.

We encourage LAFCO to support annexation proposals that advance regional housing goals and reflect cooperation between cities and the county. Thoughtful housing development, whether in Santa Maria, Orcutt or beyond, is essential to the long-term health of our economy and the well-being of our residents.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Kitts, Chair of the Board of Directors
Santa Maria Valley Chamber

Sincerely,

Michael Boyer, President & CEO
Santa Maria Valley Chamber