

### **SAFEGUARD OUR SAN DIEGO COUNTRYSIDE INITIATIVE (2018)**

**POSITION:** The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to OPPOSE the initiative on February 13, 2018 as the existing and appropriate check to a legislative action such as a General Plan Amendment in a representative democracy is the referendum process.

**STATUS:** The initiative was announced in late January. The coalition has begun to gather 68,000 valid signatures, which must be completed by mid-May to be eligible to be on the ballot.

#### **SUMMARY**

Safeguard Our San Diego Countryside is a county-wide initiative addressing the County's General Plan. The initiative would require a public vote on any amendment to the General Plan that increase the density or number of homes.

#### **INDUSTRIES IMPACTED**

The initiative would have a direct and immediate impact on any business affiliated or charged with building homes. As it would significantly prolong the process of receiving approval to build, it would add costs to businesses in those industries and increase a new element of uncertainty. In addition, the initiative would constitute a new major impediment to building homes further exacerbating the housing crisis. This would indirectly impact all employers through talent attraction and retention.

#### **SUPPORTERS**

None reported.

#### **OPPONENTS**

Building Industry Association

#### **ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR**

Developers are circumventing the agreed upon General Plan for the County by introducing General Plan Amendments (GPA's) that disregard the years of resources and efforts it took to adopt the plan, and fails to preserve environmental spaces intended to remain undeveloped.

#### **ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION**

General Plans are intended to be general, and allow for flexibility. The requirement that any change to increase the number of homes being built, particularly during a well-documented housing crisis, is counterintuitive to the agreed upon solution to the crisis: building more housing. Furthermore, residents are currently well equipped to oppose any GPA's through existing processes.

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

The land that comprises the unincorporated areas of the County makes up less than 6% of the County's actual land. The proponents of the measure have argued that they are sick of fighting each development proposal individually and instead would like to address the intentions to build additional homes "once and for all." It is important to note that the County remains woefully below its Regional Housing Need Assessment numbers and is continually failing to build an adequate number of homes to sustain natural population growth (meaning that the need for additional homes is not due to migration).

There is concern that using the initiative process to zone, or more specifically using the initiative process to eliminate opportunities via zoning, is an inappropriate way to manage land use. With one of the highest median home prices in the country, further limiting the supply of homes will only serve to increase the price of homes, driving residents further away, increasing commutes and crippling the ability of employers to hire and retain talent.