



**Ventura County Coalition of  
Labor, Agriculture and Business**

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September 15, 2014

Ventura County Board of Supervisors  
Attn: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
Hall of Administration, 4th Floor  
800 S. Victoria Avenue, L#1920  
Ventura, CA 93009

**RE: Recommendation by Supervisor Steve Bennett to add a project to the Planning Division list to Allow Open Decks in Setback Areas (Item 27) - Please Circulate**

CoLAB, Ventura County, is in favor of the above recommendation for the Ventura County Planning Division to revise the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) to allow open decks in side and rear setback areas.

On April 17, 2014 the Planning Commission held a second hearing on an application for a Site Plan Modification with respect to a request for a deck in the side yard of a residence in the Coastal Zone which is prohibited by existing code. In review of the staff report and the submittals to the Planning Department, it does not seem that the code in question has a legitimate purpose as a blanket prohibition on construction design, even though this has now become the norm. However, Planning staff communicated to the applicant's representative that they do not have the dedicated resources to conduct the study needed to justify a change in the code. A revision of the CZO code would be a simple and beneficial solution.

Having read the letters submitted to the Commission by the applicant, the scope of the study could be limited to a determination of whether having such a deck in a side yard could be a reasonable use. It would not need to find that all decks in every case should be allowed. We agree with Supervisor Bennett that the County would continue to retain discretion over permits through the site plan modification process. The proposed revision would allow homeowners to legalize existing decks and to obtain approval of new ones through this process, requiring approval by the Planning Director. CoLAB believes that such an analysis would not be overly time-consuming.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Gray Jensen".

Lynn Gray Jensen  
Executive Director