

March 31, 2010

Honorable Trish Kelly
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Way
Irvine, CA 92602

Re: Proposed 2010 Planning and Development Services Fee Adjustments

Director Kelly,

I am writing on behalf of the Building Industry Association of Southern California, Orange County Chapter (BIA/OC) to address the proposed increases to the planning and development services fee schedule. I would like to start by expressing our appreciation of the staff's consideration in allowing us time to review and comment.

As you know the economic crisis has been devastating to our industry. Understanding the far reaching impact our industry has on the overall economy; many local jurisdictions have taken extraordinary action to stimulate recovery. For instance, many local jurisdictions, ranging from cities to school districts, have reduced fees or delayed fee schedule increases based on the current recession.

The increases that you are considering are being implemented in order to give non-sworn personnel in the Planning and Development Services section a pay raise. It is absolutely unconscionable that a public agency is offering pay increases to public employees in today's economic climate. All levels of government are suffering massive cuts, lay-offs, and furloughs, yet the OCFA seeks to not only maintain the status quo, but actually increase pay. It is doubly offensive that these pay increases are being made on the backs of businesses from an industry that has been devastated by the economic crisis.

Government agencies at all levels are facing revenue challenges and must find ways to reduce expenses. The old practice of simply raising fees each year is no longer sustainable. Planning and development services fee increases are not justified in 2010.

The BIA/OC is vehemently opposed to the proposed planning and development services fee increases. We strongly encourage the OCFA to either re-negotiate your contracts or seek other cost cutting measures to offset the existing agreements.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Bryan M. Starr
Deputy Executive Officer

Cc: OCFA, Budget and Finance Committee
Keith Richter, Chief
Laura Blaul, Fire Marshal
Brett Petroff, Deputy Fire Marshal



**Orange County
Chapter**

Building Industry Association
of Southern California

17744 Sky Park Circle
Suite 170
Irvine, California 92614
949.553.9500
fax 949.553.9507
www.biaoc.com
www.newhomesmatch.com
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to new homes

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