

What will Measure J do

~~RR - Sc - Land of Growth~~

# Santa Cruz supervisors hear views on growth

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SANTA CRUZ — The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has entered the final lap of its race to put a growth management system together, but opponents of the effort — who have been nipping at the board's heels since the beginning — are hanging tough.

## Inside:

### It doesn't matter

Columnist Richard Reeves claims the Department of Housing and Urban Development is a bureaucracy with a life of its own, like the flu, so it doesn't really matter who runs it.

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Poised over the supervisors' heads if they fail to finish the race are a lawsuit accusing them of failing to implement Measure J — the growth-management ordinance approved by voters last year — and a threatened "shutdown" of county land use activities by the state Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

This week the supervisors held a public hearing on the environmental impact report (EIR) assessing steps they have taken to control growth in the county whose population — until recently — was increasing faster than that of any other in the state.

Certification of the EIR by the board is the last step required for a growth management system to be put formally in place.

Actions taken so far to reduce growth have included:

✓ Limiting the number of residential building permits to be issued in the unincorporated area in 1979 to 930, about 25 percent fewer than were issued in 1978.

✓ Setting an overall population growth rate for the unincorporated area of 2.2 percent in 1979.

✓ Taking an inventory of agricultural land and deciding there can be no development on that which has been judged "economically viable."

✓ Drawing a line around the urbanized sections of the county and decreeing that most new development should take place inside that line.

At this week's hearing, the supervisors were told the EIR, prepared by the Berkeley consulting firm of Duncan and Jones, was a "Mad Magazine slapped between two covers" and a "total disaster."

These comments came, respectively, from Bruce Reed, president of the Santa Cruz County Builders Exchange, and Fred Rule, business agent for the local Plumbers and Steamfitters Union.

From the beginning, it has been representatives of the construction and real estate industry who have been most

critical of Measure J and the steps taken to implement it.

Reed criticized the EIR's finding that growth in the county has begun to slow naturally and that therefore the limits imposed by the supervisors would not reduce it below what was going to occur anyway.

"I just can't believe growth would be slowing here," Reed said.

Because growth is not artificially being cut by Measure J, the report finds that its impact on the local economy, particularly the construction industry, will be almost nil. Again, Reed disagreed.

"The impacts are far greater than what's expressed in this report," he said. "There's a world of difference between what the industry says is real and what the consultants say is real. Unfortunately, we're the ones who have to live here in the real world."

While Reed's remarks reflected the feelings of most of those who spoke at the hearing, there were a few dissenters.

Contractor Richard Barrett pointed out building new homes isn't the only work available to the construction industry. Remodeling jobs and commercial buildings are still needed, he said.

San Lorenzo Valley environmentalist Bonnie Gee said that once a "period of adjustment" had been survived, everyone would find that Measure J was something that could be lived with.

But, the main theme of the hearing was the problems being wrought by Measure J, and those who insisted they were victims of those problems asked the board not to certify the EIR.

The supervisors were non-committal, putting off a decision on certification until Sept. 4.

One of the major sticking points of Measure J has been its requirement that 15 percent of all new housing built be affordable by low- or moderate-income persons.

✓ S of Measure 8/14/79