



January 31, 2023

Sent by mail and email

C/o City Clerk Kendall Sawyer
Mayor Kevin McDonnell and Petaluma City Council Members
Petaluma, CA 94952
ksawyer@cityofpetaluma.org

Olivia Ervin
Principal Environmental Planner
City of Petaluma
11 English Street
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Re: Scott Ranch Project Approval

Dear Mayor McDonnell and Council Members:

The Center for Biological Diversity is dedicated to saving life on earth. We work to secure a future for all species, great and small, hovering on the brink of extinction. We want those who come after us to inherit a world where the wild is still alive.

I am writing to express our support for the Scott Ranch proposal recommended by your Planning Commission for full approval by the Council.

This old 58-acre ranch, as you know, is zoned residential within the southern edge of your city limits and its owner, Davidon Homes, proposed building over 100 homes there in 2004. After years of community opposition due to the environmental sensitivity and scenic value of the landscape, Earth Island Institute's Kelly Creek Protection Project negotiated a compromise with the developer in 2018. The proposal now before the City would protect 89% of the property as open space in perpetuity.

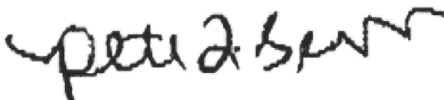
We have long been concerned with development on the Scott Ranch site because the site includes habitat occupied by a population of the California red-legged frog (CRLF), a threatened species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. Part of the Scott Ranch is within the northern tip of the federally designated critical habitat for CRLF. However, as a result of the negotiated compromise, planned development on the site has been extensively redesigned to minimize impacts to CRLF. There will now be minimal modification of CRLF critical habitat,

which includes Kelly Creek, the entire southern portion of the ranch, and a stock pond that is a CRLF breeding site.

In addition, upon taking title to the 47 acres of the site that will be protected as public open space, the Kelly Creek Protection Project will conduct a \$900,000 program of habitat restoration and improvements that will promote the recovery of CRLF. These improvements include fencing the stock pond to exclude cows, fencing the two riparian creek beds, repairing deep gully damage to protect water quality, and planting both native trees and undergrowth for refugia.

In 2015, one of our attorneys met with Greg Colvin to view the land and advise on steps needed to protect wildlife habitat. Given its long-standing use for cattle grazing and the presence of a herd of cows with access to the entire watershed, our view was not only that the residential footprint should be greatly reduced, but also that a comprehensive program to reverse the impact of decades of overgrazing by cattle should be undertaken. The proposal now before you echoes those recommendations and will improve essential habitat for the CRLF and other native species. The proposal also shows that CEQA—and the Endangered Species Act—work. Here, the application of these laws resulted in an improved project that better conserves CRLF and other wildlife.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Galvin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Galvin
Director of Programs
Center for Biological Diversity