

December 26, 2003

Los Angeles City Planning Department
Maya E. Zaitzevsky
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, Ca 90012

RECEIVED
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

DEC 29 2003

ENVIRONMENTAL
UNIT

Re: ENV-2002-2481-EIR; SCH#2002091018
Canyon Hills Project-DEIR Comments

Dear Ms. Zaitzevsky,

We are writing this letter to you to voice our concerns and dismay about the inadequacies of sections of the DEIR of the Canyon Hills Project—currently known as “Whitebird”. In our opinion the DEIR is flawed and fails to address major environmental issues that will arise if this project were ever to see the light of day as currently proposed.

103-1

The biologist presumes to be an expert on the animal life and plant life in this area—yet fails to address the continued decline in several endangered species indigenous to the area of the proposed development. There has been a steady decline in the deer, raccoon, possum, skunk, coyote, bob-cat, hawk, geese, duck and owl population, according to all of our long-term neighbors. The biologist fails in his report to concretely show how this population will be protected and further decline halted when this project begins construction. Wasn't that his charge, to show how these endangered animals would not be harmed further? By neglecting to comprehensively address this core issue, how can this report be considered to be acceptable? It cannot.

103-2

Recently, representatives from the developers sponsoring Whitebird held informational meetings in the local elementary school for all of the residents to voice their concerns about the draft EIR. We attended this meeting and were told to speak to the biologist who assisted in the biological section of the DEIR. We asked him, if this development, as currently proposed, would be compatible with wildlife in the area. He stated, “No, it would not be good for the wildlife, and could further erode the quantity and quality of life for the indigenous animal life. But, the coyotes may find that they will have an increased food supply through the growth of the numbers of neighborhood pets that would result in this development going forward.”

103-3

We wonder where in the current zoning laws that residents' cats and dogs as a food source for coyotes should be considered a positive aspect of a scenic preservation plan or community plan. We are sure that this is not in the language of the law nor the intent of those who drafted those laws. The DEIR failed to include the professional opinion of this biologist that potential homebuyers should consider their pets to be coyote “lunch”. We would hope that if this project ever gets approved pursuant to this DEIR that all potential homebuyers be made aware of this important, yet unprinted statement regarding “positive” implications of the Whitebird project on local habitat.

103-4

Another issue of grave concern to us is how will the increased need for fire and public safety officers be guaranteed, given the challenges of local government financing in California at this time. The DEIR fails to address our current and future budget deficit, the worst in the written history of our state. This deficit will be with us for a long time according to most credible finance experts, since we are borrowing \$15 billion dollars against future bonds just to meet current basic needs.

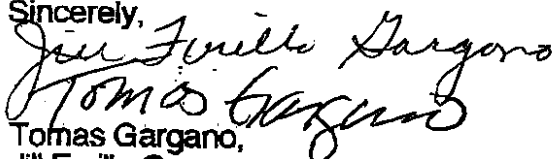
Our neighbors describe how the numbers of police and fire firefighters have not remained proportionate with growth in the area, and that emergency response time has severely increased. This was witnessed most recently in the fires of October 2003 in Southern California. The DEIR does not adequately address who will pay for the increased need for fire protection with this proposed development. Will it come from increases in the vehicle license fee? Hardly, since this was recently cut by the current Governor. Will it come from the state's general fund? Not likely, since the legislature is disputing the Governor's recent move to backfill CURRENT local government funding through executive order.

103-4

The DEIR is remiss in taking into account this current crisis, which could have severe consequences for residents in Tujunga and Sunland, including the loss of human life. As seen with recent fires so close to this proposed development, we did not have adequate resources to effectively fight those fires, and had to rely on the goodwill of other counties and states to help protect human and animal life. Does the DEIR presume that with the large influx of residents as a result of Whitebird, that we will be bailed out by other counties and states when (not if) fires rage through these canyons? If so, this is not consistent with current zoning laws and codes nor within the guidelines of the Scenic Preservation specific Plan and Community Plan.

103-5

These are only a small sample of comments that we have regarding the inadequate and inferior provisions of the DEIR. As taxpaying citizens and homeowners within the City of Los Angeles, we expect that the City Planning Department will carefully consider our comments, as well as those submitted by dozens of citizen 'experts' and require the Canyon Hills DEIR to be re-issued to address these important issues and hold this potentially dangerous project to compliance with all laws and the Scenic Plan.

Sincerely,

 Tomas Gargano,
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