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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sierra Club Launches Stop Harvest Hills Campaign

Campaign in Escondido Re-Ignites with Video Release

Sierra Club North County Group announced the release of their [new video](#) for its Stop Harvest Hills Escondido campaign.

“We are ready to re-ignite the fight to halt sprawl development in Escondido and to Stop Harvest Hills,” said Laura Hunter, Chair of the Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club North County Group. “Defeat of the Harvest Hills development proposal is a top priority for San Diego Sierra Club members and their allies.”

Harvest Hills, if built, will include 550 luxury homes in a gated community next to the Safari Park in the San Pasqual Valley near Escondido. Proposed by Concordia Homes, it originally was marketed as Safari Highlands Ranch, but in 2019 Concordia changed the name to Harvest Hills perhaps to try to make the project sound more environmentally friendly. The project is proposed as a sprawl land use pattern throughout an 1,100 acres site of pristine chaparral and wildlife habitat.

The project is in the unincorporated portion of the County and would require the City of Escondido to annex the property if approved. It would also require the approval of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The video includes a recording of objections to the project process made at a LAFCO meeting by the chair, Dianne Jacob.

The video builds on community opposition that has experienced explosive growth against sprawl development in the north county. The recent defeat of the North River Farms project in Oceanside was the third major project denied by the public over the past few years. Previously defeated projects have included Newland Sierra and Lilac Hills Ranch.

“Sierra Club opposes Harvest Hills for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that this new development will decimate hundreds of acres of critical wildlife habitat and pristine open space to build 550 “estate homes” in a “Very High Danger” fire zone, exacerbating potential evacuation efforts of area residents to a dangerous level, and draining funding from the urban core,” stated Sierra Club San Diego Chapter Conservation Chair George Courser.

Chapter Director, Richard Miller, called the project “A continuation of sprawl land use patterns that further frustrate efforts to achieve effective and efficient transit, adding an additional 67,000 vehicle miles traveled a day, significantly increasing traffic in an already congested area.”

More than two dozen community and environmental organizations join Sierra Club in opposing the project and are organizing against it.

JP Theberge, the founder of pro-Smart Growth think tank, Grow the San Diego Way, stated, “It is fiscally irresponsible for the city to pursue this project. A wide body of research shows that the cost of providing services to far-flung developments far exceeds the funds raised by property taxes and fees, particularly when compared to infill development where services and infrastructure are already in place. Sprawl projects like this result in a de-facto subsidy by city taxpayers of high-end sprawl development projects, like Harvest Hills.”

“Despite a big name change, the fundamentals of this project have not changed,” said NeySa Ely, founder of the San Pasqual Valley Preservation Alliance. “Trying to use the annexation process to effectively upzone 1,000+ acres from 27 homes to 550 homes – a 20X increase – in the face of the high fire risk and impact to habitat and wildlife, is why Harvest Hills is the epitome of the reckless urban sprawl development efforts being challenged and defeated in San Diego County and beyond.”

The video features several speakers including neighbor and member of the San Pasqual Valley Preservation Alliance Scott Graves, Escondido resident Linda Stanwood, Youth Climate Activist and Escondido resident Aisha Wallace-Palomares, Tribal Councilmember of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians Dave Toler, and former Escondido Union School Board member George McClure.

Sierra Club is a proponent of quality urban infill, transportation-oriented development, smart growth, and affordable housing and will continue to campaign to defeat this ill-conceived project. The video can be viewed on the Sierra Club NCG [Stop Harvest Hills Facebook Page](#) or the San Diego [Sierra Club YouTube channel](#)

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About the Sierra Club:

The San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club is San Diego’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization, encompassing San Diego and Imperial Counties, with more than 15,000 members. Founded in 1948, the San Diego Chapter seeks to preserve the special nature of the San Diego and Imperial Valley area through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3 million members and supporters across all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

The Sierra Club North County Group represents over 2,600 members in inland North San Diego County.