

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

East Meadow Action Committee Files Suit Against UCSC's Student Housing West Project for the Second Time

On April 15 the East Meadow Action Committee (EMAC) filed suit against the Regents of the University of California alleging violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in new actions taken by the Regents just 4 weeks ago.

The Regents originally approved the project in March of 2019, and EMAC filed suit the following month. The Judge in that case ultimately ordered the Regents to set aside those project approvals. In March of 2021 the Regents complied with that order, and then minutes later re-approved exactly the same project. It is that re-approval that has prompted EMAC's latest suit.

The following is a statement by EMAC:

"In their first approval of this project 2 years ago, the University of California (UC) acknowledged that there were environmentally superior alternatives for this project, but rejected them on grounds that they were so much more expensive as to be infeasible. However, UC declined to make available to its Regents or to the public any cost analysis to support that conclusion.

"UC subsequently put before the Regents its cost analysis of their preferred project and a number of alternatives. Last month it again made the argument that the environmentally superior alternatives should be rejected on grounds that they were far too expensive. However, now that the University's calculations are publicly available, it is clear that the comparative analysis was biased, vastly overstating the cost difference between UC's preferred project and the alternatives. That is a central allegation of our latest suit.

"Nearly every designer, architect, and planner ever associated with UCSC, including the UCSC administration's own appointed Design Advisory Board, agrees with EMAC that there are far better ways forward for this project that do not include destruction of the East Meadow, and that would allow construction of student housing to begin quickly. The university's obstinacy is causing needless delay.

"It is particularly disappointing that they refuse to reconsider some version of the project they originally wanted to build, located entirely on the west side of campus and not in the East Meadow. This option could provide all the student housing, the

new childcare facility, and family student residences, on a much larger site. It would not require the temporary off-campus relocation of family students. UCSC would need to protect a modest amount of nearby red-legged frog habitat, after negotiating with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a course it arbitrarily rejected in September 2017.

“We remain committed to working with UCSC to get on-campus student housing built to accommodate its current student population in an environmentally responsible way.”

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