

**Planning & Zoning
Committee of the
MidCoast
Community Council**
PO Box 64, Moss Beach
CA 94038
Serving 12,000 residents

May 17, 2004

San Mateo County Environmental Services Agency
455 County Center, 4th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Via FAX: 650.599.1721/Email

To: Marcia Raines, Director, San Mateo County Environmental Services Agency

RE: San Mateo County Zoning Regulations, Section 6565.7.1.m of Coast Design Review District Standards regarding underground utilities

Dear Marcia:

We are requesting assurance by the County that all construction of new single-family dwellings shall be required to place their utilities underground pursuant to San Mateo County Zoning Regulations and Coastsides Design Review Standards.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting of 4/20/04, the Board of Supervisors granted the appeal of John Steadman, PLN2003-00344, and found that he did not have to place his utilities underground in connection with the construction of a new single-family dwelling in El Granada.

The regulations require undergrounding, as you pointed out in the "Inter-Department Correspondence" regarding this appeal, addressed to the Honorable Board of Supervisors dated March, 22, 2004, page 1:

"Staff's Response: The San Mateo County Zoning Regulations, Section 6565.7.1.m of Coastal Design Review District Standards, specifies that "overhead utility lines are placed underground where appropriate to reduce the visual impact in open and scenic areas." Also, page 20 of the County's Community Design Manual under "utilities" states: "underground utility lines should be required except where such undergrounding would result in significant adverse environmental impacts."

Despite the above-mentioned regulations and standards, it is our understanding that part of Mr. Steadman's appeal was based on the fact that several new homes have been allowed to be built recently without the requirement of underground utilities. We believe this practice has to stop.

We realize that a line has to be drawn in terms of requiring all new homes, even those in the middle of a block with overhead utilities, to underground their utilities. We believe that the newly adopted Design Review Standards provides the opportunity for drawing that line. We respectfully request that the County adopt a policy that all new homes shall be required to underground their utilities and that any appeal from this requirement shall be deemed a request for a variance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Sara Bassler
Chair, Planning & Zoning