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CITY HALL

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SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting: December 15, 2016

Subject

Consider recommend that Cupertino City Council approve a resolution supporting the prohibition of industrial clear-cut logging in the forests of California.

Recommended Action

Recommend that Cupertino City Council approve the attached draft resolution supporting the prohibition of industrial clear-cut logging in the forests of California.

Background

A member of the City's Sustainability Commission and a local Sierra Club chapter have requested that the Cupertino City Council consider adopting a resolution encouraging the State legislature and Governor to take steps to prohibit industrial clear-cut logging in the forests of California (Attachment B).

Discussion

Staff conducted research on clear-cutting in California and drafted the attached resolution.

According to the proponents of this resolution, widespread industrial clear-cutting commonly involves the removal of virtually all trees in 20-30 acre tracts and requires broad, repeated application of toxic herbicides that can potentially enter waterways; all of which increase the potential risks of wildfires, landslides, soil erosion, pest invasions, tree diseases, and loss of biodiversity. Although clear-cutting is already prohibited in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, San Francisco, and Marin Counties, it is still allowed on private land elsewhere in California.

California forests are valuable resources that sequester carbon, release oxygen, cool streams, prevent flooding and siltation, resist fire, host recreation supporting the economy of mountain communities, and provide food, shelter and migration routes for wildlife. Cupertino values our urban forest as evidenced by our open space and "Tree City USA" status which we have earned for four consecutive years since 2012.

Nearby cities have taken action at the behest of the Sierra Club. The City of Saratoga wrote a letter to the Governor stating their opposition to clear-cutting, while the City of

Sunnyvale has placed the issue on their list of desired legislation. The cities of San Francisco, Monte Sereno, Menlo Park, Brisbane, Berkeley, Daly City, and Davis have passed similar resolutions to the one proposed here (Attachment C).

Staff recommends supporting advocacy efforts to encourage the State legislature to enact legislation prohibiting industrial clear-cut logging in California forests, including the draft resolution.

Sustainability Impact

Approving this resolution could encourage the State legislature to prohibit clear-cutting which would reduce the negative impacts described above throughout California, fostering resilient and biologically diverse forests.

Fiscal Impact

None anticipated.

Prepared by: Katy Nomura, Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Jacqueline Guzman, Deputy City Manager

Attachments:

A – Proposed Clear-Cutting Resolution

B – Letter from Sierra Club Member

C – Clear-Cutting Resolutions from Other Cities