



Good Morning Chair and Members of the Board.

My name is Marissa Wittrien. I am speaking today on Agenda File No. 26-3067 and Agenda File No. 26-3065.

Agenda File No. 26-3067 – Implementation of the County’s Homelessness Strategic Plan

I appreciate the County’s recognition of Disability Pride Month. However, as someone living with a disability, I care much more about whether disability accommodations are implemented consistently in day-to-day County operations rather than a month of recognition.

As the Board considers investing additional public funds to implement the Homelessness Strategic Plan, I respectfully ask the Board to examine whether meaningful disability access is being consistently implemented across County departments.

I am a disabled resident with documented homelessness and housing instability. In the fall of 2024, after exhausting other housing options, I moved onto my family’s agricultural property as a last resort while permanent housing development remained delayed since 2020 by permitting and code enforcement issues.

I became involved after my father granted me permission because my housing was directly affected and regarded as a public nuisance. I made my first request for a disability accommodation during the March 16, 2026 hearing. When I attempted to submit my accommodation letter after the hearing, I was informed by Code Enforcement that there was “nothing to tie it to” and that I would need to submit it with my father’s grading permit. From my perspective as the disabled occupant experiencing the impact, my request should have been able to stand on its own. Despite the Department’s knowledge of my disability and my homelessness and housing instability, meaningful accommodation did not occur.

During the June 15, 2026 hearing, I was told that the County could abate the only housing available to my family, charge us for doing so, and restart enforcement fines. Only after this public threat did I return to the DCD reception desk and specifically ask, “Do you have an ADA coordinator on staff?” and “I need to speak with them.” ~~That~~ request finally initiated my current ADA interactive process.

My direct.

This concern extends beyond one department.

For the past year, I have also sought a disability-related accommodation through the County’s CalFresh appeals process. My monthly food benefits were reduced from \$362 to \$24, and despite following the required appeal procedures, that accommodation remains unresolved. The reduction has left me unable to afford necessary medical supplies and unable to purchase enough food without relying on local food banks and community food drives. It has also forced me to rely on my disabled daughter’s Supplemental Security Income in ways I believe are inconsistent

with the intended, restricted purpose of those benefits. During my appeal, I requested consideration of whether a disabled minor's SSI could be excluded as a household resource because it is intended to meet the child's disability-related needs, not to replace basic household food assistance. I was informed that such a change would have to proceed through the appropriate channels.

These experiences raise an important question: If meaningful disability accommodations are not working consistently across multiple County departments, how can we expect the Homelessness Strategic Plan to succeed?

I respectfully ask the Board to:

- Review how disability accommodations are implemented across County departments, including Code Enforcement and CalFresh-related processes.
- Examine whether enforcement practices have, in some instances, extended beyond legitimate public health and safety needs and created unnecessary hardship for property owners trying to comply with County requirements regarding lawful development.
- Consider policy improvements and accountability measures that better protect disabled residents and families from avoidable housing loss and food insecurity.
- Include people with disabilities and people with lived experience of recent homelessness in implementing the Homelessness Strategic Plan, because those of us who have gone through these systems can help ensure the plan works in practice—not just on paper.

Thank you for your time and consideration on Agenda File No. 26-3067.

Agenda File No. 26-3065 – Opportunity Zones 2.0 (Recommendation of Census Tracts)

My second topic is Agenda File No. 26-3065, regarding the recommendation of Census Tracts to the State Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development for Opportunity Zones 2.0.

I appreciate the County's efforts to encourage investment and economic development in lower-income communities. Strategic investment can create important opportunities, but I respectfully ask that investment also include clear accountability measures to ensure the benefits reach the residents who have historically been most underserved.

The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury report, Affordable Housing: A Plan Without a Home, highlighted longstanding concerns regarding the County's ability to meet the housing needs of extremely low-income and very-low-income residents. These populations have consistently experienced the greatest barriers to obtaining stable, affordable housing.

As the County considers Opportunity Zones 2.0 designations and future development opportunities, I respectfully ask:

What measurable accountability standards will ensure that new housing created through economic investment serves extremely low-income and very-low-income residents—rather than continuing a pattern where new housing primarily serves higher-income levels?

I believe this is an important opportunity for the County to align economic development with its housing obligations, including its Regional Housing Needs Allocation goals, and to address homelessness in a more meaningful way.

Economic development and housing investment should not only be measured by the amount of investment attracted or the number of units built. They should also be measured by whether those investments improve housing stability for the residents who are most vulnerable to displacement and homelessness.

I respectfully request that the Board consider incorporating stronger accountability measures, transparent reporting, and structured community input from residents with lived experience of housing instability when evaluating the success of Opportunity Zones 2.0 investments.

Ultimately, the success of these programs should be measured by whether they create meaningful opportunities for the people who need them most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

