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Comment Regarding Item D.2

1/28/2025

Candace Andersen, Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

John Gioia, Supervisor

Diane Burgis, Supervisor

Ken Carlson, Supervisor

Shanelle Scales-Preston, Supervisor

Dear Supervisors:

My name is Katherine Walley, and I am a resident of Walnut Creek. I also happen to be the daughter and spouse of immigrants living in Contra Costa. Like many of you, there are coworkers, neighbors and individuals that touch almost every aspect of my life who are themselves also immigrants. Immigrants are an integral part of the social, cultural and economic fabric that is Contra Costa.

We know that there is a mutual relationship between the thriving of our county and the thriving of those who immigrate to the United States. As Robin Wall Kimmerer details in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, "All flourishing is mutual." The flourishing of individuals is connected to the flourishing of the whole, and so too, the ability for the whole to thrive depends on the wellbeing of individuals, each existing in a state of reciprocity.

That said, we also know that many immigrants face systemic barriers that hinder their ability to thrive, including, but not limited to, a lack of access to legal information and representation, language barriers, and structural challenges to navigating public services. As such, I ask that you support the centering of immigrants in our county's investments in policies and programs, particularly the establishment of a robust and accessible immigrant support hub, such as the proposed Welcoming Immigrant Support Hub ("WISH Center"). I urge you to prioritize and fully fund this initiative, ensuring that it includes culturally and linguistically appropriate policies, expanded legal support and community-based services, and serves as a safe location where immigrants can receive critical services and information.

Thank you,
Katherine Walley