

Lopez, Maria [COB]

From: Erin Dwyer <erinkdwyer@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2026 7:07 PM
To: Wagner, Donald
Cc: COB_Response
Subject: May 5, 2026, Board Agenda Item 23, Appeal of PA23-0119 for Saddleback Meadows Use Permit

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear Supervisor Wagner,

My name is Erin, and I am a resident of Hidden Ridge. I am writing to ask you to approve our community's appeal and deny the Use Permit for the Saddleback Meadows development at the May 5 Board of Supervisors hearing. This is a discretionary permit. You are **not required to approve it**. I am asking you to please use that authority for the safety of residents and the support of our environment and wildlife.

I have evacuated from this area before. I know what it feels like to be on Valley Vista Way when fear takes over and every second counts. What I saw during the Palisades Fire January 2025 made that fear concrete in a way I cannot shake, people trapped in gridlocked traffic, abandoning their cars, running on foot to escape, abandoning all belongings. That happened on a road with multiple exit points. We have one, Valley Vista Way is the only way in and out of Hidden Ridge. There is no alternate route. There is no second chance if something goes wrong. And even if we get OUT we lead to a 2 lane road that is the only road for numerous neighborhoods during an evacuation.

Saddleback Meadows would add 181 units to an area that is already surrounded by new developments such as, Iron Ridge, Sky Ridge, Saddle Crest all funneling into the same El Toro/Santiago Canyon corridor during an emergency. To my knowledge, no adequate evacuation analysis has been done that accounts for all of this new development combined. The environmental review on which this project is based was certified in 2002. The wildfire landscape in 2026 is unrecognizable compared to 2002. The Airport Fire, the Bond Fire, and the Holy Fire have all burned in this region since that analysis was completed. None of those realities are reflected in the current environmental record.

There are additional concerns I urge you to consider:

— Mountain lions were listed as a threatened species under California's Endangered Species Act in February 2026. The Saddleback Meadows site contains a known wildlife linkage connecting regional parks. No updated analysis of impacts to mountain lions has been conducted, which triggers a mandatory finding of significance under CEQA and requires a new Environmental Impact Report.

— Climate change impacts and greenhouse gas emissions were not evaluated, a requirement that did not exist in 2002 but is now **mandatory under CEQA**.

— Details of the proposed one-million-gallon water tank and associated infrastructure have not been finalized or publicly disclosed, and no environmental analysis of its construction or operation has been

conducted.

— The project requires over 7.5 million cubic yards of grading enough to cover approximately **1,200 football fields with three feet of dirt**. This is not consistent with the Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan's stated goals to preserve the rural character of the area and protect significant landform, biological, and scenic resources.

I'd like to reiterate that this is a discretionary permit. You are not required to approve it. I am asking you to use that authority.

At minimum, I urge you to **require a new, publicly circulated Environmental Impact Report** that addresses wildfire risk, evacuation capacity, wildlife impacts, water supply, and climate change and to return the project to the Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan Review Board and Planning Commission for full public review.

The residents and voters of Hidden Ridge and the surrounding communities deserve data, not assurances. We deserve a process that is transparent, current, and considers all that is at stake in TODAY's day, not 2002. Our safety is not a detail to be resolved after approval.

Thank you for your time and your service to this community. I hope you will stand with us on May 5.

Respectfully,
Erin
Hidden Ridge Resident