

February 4, 2020

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni and the Marin Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Supervisor Dennis Rodoni and the Marin County Board of Supervisors:

I'm submitting this written letter to express my support for the Community Land Trust Association (CLAM) of West Marin's efforts to build affordable homes at the Coast Guard property in Pt Reyes. As a lifelong resident of Marshall, a dairy farmer and the founder and CEO of Straus Family Creamery, I believe there is an urgent need to keep our rural communities resilient by making viable housing available to workers and their families. This is best accomplished by prioritizing solutions that are generated for and by the communities they serve. This is why I support the selection of CLAM to repurpose the Coast Guard site.

I have long advocated for affordable housing along the rural coast as a community depends on permanent residents to maintain viable schools, roads, emergency services, and other critical infrastructure elements. CLAM's vision of a neighborhood fully integrated into the Point Reyes Village, with housing available to a spectrum of incomes and with community uses on-site, has been born out of their ongoing process of grassroots organizing for input and participation, and reflects the coalescing of a shared community vision for this site. We at Straus Family Creamery have worked with CLAM over the years in developing this vision.

My mother, Ellen Straus, co-founded the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) in 1980 to protect agricultural land in Marin. Over the years, I have witnessed the success of the land trust model in keeping farming families on their land, maintaining our local agricultural traditions, and providing a national model that gives small-scale independent family farms a chance to be viable. I believe that CLAM, as a community land trust with deep relationships with local residents and organizations, is uniquely positioned to shape the housing and community uses on the site. Furthermore, I encourage consideration that this property becomes community-owned land on a community land trust model so that local voices will guide this neighborhood in the future.

CLAM's partnership with the nonprofit affordable housing developer Eden Housing will guide the financing and construction of the project. CLAM's unparalleled community support, together with Eden's financial strength, experience, and track record, is a strong partnership.

This decision will have a direct bearing on our community's immediate and future ability to thrive. I urge you to act to make this vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Albert Straus

Organic Dairy Farmer, Marshall  
Founder and CEO, Straus Family Creamery, Marshall and Petaluma