

David Lee Hoffman, CDO  
Post Office Box 10  
Lagunitas, California, 94938  
July 12, 2021

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
Room 329  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Dennis,

This year marks my fiftieth anniversary living here in the San Geronimo Valley. I still wake up every morning in awe of the precious beauty of this place. It's been a wondrous and magical journey. But it also appears like this is the year that journey could end. Just how that plays out remains to be seen...

Prior to settling in the San Geronimo Valley, I had spent ten years living on the road out of the country. I lived my life carving my way through untraveled paths that took me to every hidden nook and cranny of the world in search of something I wasn't even sure of. But slowly, bit by bit, mile by mile, year by year, it began to reveal itself to me. It became clear the world was in trouble and needed ways for its people—particularly those not favored by fortune—to live healthily and happily in a sustainable way. At a time when perhaps these concerns were not at the forefront of the world's attention I became compelled to devote my life to experimentation and the gathering of knowledge to build, with my own hands and with my own resources, systems and processes to provide actual, practical help to deal with these existential challenges.

I choose Lagunitas as the place to put my ideas into practice. The Last Resort is a living model of sustainability. I've done it. It exists. And it works. Life attracts life. When I see snakes, frogs, lizards, and butterflies in the garden amongst my healthy and delicious veggies, I know everything is working properly. I have regular visits of Great Blue Herons and Egrets. We even found two new species of frogs this year on the property. As I write this I'm listening to the chatter of Acorn

Woodpeckers outside my window. Their nesting population is now expanding (thanks to a Douglas Fir tree I had specially prepared for their new residency and my viewing enjoyment!).

I've put in the years and the blood and the heartache to create what I consider to be a gift for the future. It's my desire to infuse young and inquisitive minds with a sense of hope, enjoyment, and inspiration.

Perhaps most important, I am hoping all my accomplishments can be the strong shoulders for the next generation of thinkers and innovators to stand on. I'm not alone in feeling The Last Resort is a vital seed that should be allowed to survive, to germinate, to grow.

I have devoted my life, labor, and resources not to enrich myself. I live simply and humbly. And now I humble myself out of a deep concern for our planet's future and pray the fine minds and clear thinkers of the County and Court will find a way to innovate a creative solution to this mess so that we all may benefit.

We know that life on our planet as we once knew it is failing fast: food security, drought, unprecedented record heat waves, wildfires, species extinction. The list continues to grow with dire urgency. If The Last Resort is sold by the Receiver and leveled for a quick profit, only the Receiver, the developers, and a handful of others will benefit. The tragedy of this waste and destruction would be beyond madness. Please do the right thing and help follow the recommendation of your own Architectural Commission who voted unanimously to preserve the property intact as having historical significance.

When we last met, you told me you thought Steve Kinsey made a mistake by pushing for the Receiver to take over my property. If you still feel that way, this would be a good time to right a wrong.

My structures will likely be standing centuries after conventional homes are long gone. But its not the outward form of the structures I praise; it's the silent systems in place that makes the property sustainable. The systems' success has far exceeded my expectations.

I live in comfort the year round, grow my own food (cooked mostly by the sun), and have a small successful home-crafted cottage industry business that provides a steady, sufficient income to pay for all my

basic living expenses (and is set up to do so for decades to come). All this is accomplished on a very small carbon footprint. This is what sustainability looks like.

Clearly I have broken the County's law by not having the County's permission to do what I have done. I accept a loss and understand the County must prevail, even if only as a deterrent to warn others of the consequences of unpermitted construction.

For years everyone was telling me I need a lawyer to make a deal with the County. I followed that advice and now after nine lawyers and spending more than \$500,000 I am in a worse position now than ever before. The judge has now ordered me to vacate next month so the Receiver can proceed with the demolition and sale of the property.

How much money would be a fair and reasonable punishment for all the fines and penalties? I would have thought \$60,000 (nearly twice what I paid for the property) would have sufficed. This is the amount Paul Smith, lawyer seven, had worked out with County Council Tom Lyons. But suddenly Lyons got replaced with County Council Brian Case who took that offer off the table.

The County has already received \$240,000 of my money to pay for delinquent taxes levied from my construction transgressions. Apparently this amount is insufficient. The County is insisting on an additional \$1.2 million dollars! If I don't pay by next month, I will lose my property that I owned and lived on for 48 years: my home, my garden, my workspace, my livelihood. Will this really happen on your watch? Do you really want to see me being made homeless over this? Would this not be considered "cruel & unusual" punishment?

I lived the Great American Dream; I worked hard, paid my taxes to the government (Federal, State, & County totaling more than \$690,000 and counting), and achieved success. But it's especially disheartening when one is trying to do what's best for the health of our planet (and personal health as well) by following laws of nature, only to have them conflict with those laws made by politicians.

Dennis, can you and I meet again at this 11<sup>th</sup> hour to see if there is any possible way to avert the unthinkable? We can talk over tea at my tea shop (I just extended the lease for another year), 7282 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Of course I'm happy to meet at your office

as well. I was going to suggest including Brian Crawford from CDA but saw he has since retired. Maybe Tom Lai?

Sincerely,

David Lee Hoffman, CDO  
Interim Curator of The Last Resort

415 488-9017

**“In my professional opinion, there is sound evidence that this is a property- an integrated collection of structures and spaces- of potential cultural importance.”**

-Mark Hulbert  
Preservation Architect

**“I was amazed and delighted to see a bit of the Himalaya so artfully and lovingly built in West Marin. I urge the Board to approve a resolution giving County Historic Landmark status to the site.”**

-Sim van der Ryn  
former California State Architect

**"The Last Resort Lagunitas constructions at 2 Alta Avenue and 230 East Cintura Avenue in Lagunitas represent one of the few existing art environments in northern California."**

-Jo Hernandez  
Director of SPACES  
(Historic property archival  
research organization now part of  
the Kohler Foundation)