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News: San Diego / County

Last modified Wednesday, April 20, 2005 11:56 PM PDT

Controversial new county fee gets second approval

By: North County Times

SAN DIEGO ---- A shorthanded county board of supervisors Wednesday unanimously finalized their approval of controversial new road-building fees that critics say will hike housing costs and hurt commercial development.

Supervisors voted 3-0 to approve the second reading Wednesday, setting the stage for the fees to take effect in June. Supervisors Bill Horn and Ron Roberts were absent.

The full board voted 4-1 to approve the fees April 12, despite the fact that even the board majority said they did not like the fees.

The board said they had no choice but to pass the "traffic impact fees" in order to unclog a "de facto moratorium" on homebuilding in the backcountry. They said the moratorium has been caused by changes to California environmental law ---- changes that require all development, large or small, to do expensive traffic-impact studies.

Supervisors say the new fees ---- as high as \$10,255 per home in Fallbrook ---- will give developers of small projects a cheaper option.

Critics, however, say the commercial rates, which run from \$8.13 per square foot to \$30-plus per square foot across the county, will "kill" off small retail development.

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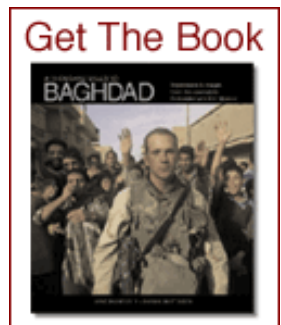
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