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MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Kaweah Coalition **has filed a Petition Writ of Mandate lawsuit against Tulare County for the recent approval of the Redwood Ranch wedding venue.**

The lawsuit petitions the County of Tulare's decision to approve the project without any environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and inconsistencies with both the Tulare County General Plan and County Zoning Ordinance.

THREE RIVERS, Calif. (March 26, 2020) Several dozen residents have joined together through **The Kaweah Coalition**, a 501(c)3 advocacy organization formed to protect the rural, agricultural legacy of Three Rivers, CA from the encroachment of large-scale commercial uses in high fire-prone areas. Tulare County's recent approval of the Redwood Ranch wedding venue sets a precedent for commercial development outside of the local Urban Development Boundary (UDB), which was designed to limit growth into areas with inadequate infrastructure and emergency services. Local residents have voiced concerns that large-scale commercial developments, approved in high fire severity zones, do not follow the development standards of local guidelines and pose serious and unwarranted safety threats to the community.

Emergency fire responses to these areas exceed the local 15-minute response times, negatively affecting the local fire department's ISO rating as well as local fire insurance premiums. The Exeter District Ambulance struggles to meet time response time standards to Three Rivers and cannot respond adequately to areas outside of the Three Rivers UDB, making it harder to continue service for this small community during busy summer months. Emergency response and evacuations for up to hundreds of wedding guests on the substandard roadway of South Fork Drive directly endanger residents.

Foothill residents are not willing to risk their safety in the name of unregulated development and have cited the Paradise Fire as a lesson in overdevelopment without regulation. At the very least, a catastrophic wildfire could shut down the entire economy of Three Rivers for several months, with widespread and lasting damage to the community as well as its rural way of life. The livelihoods of local ranchers, farmers, and small business owners depend-upon clean water which the Kaweah River provides.

With their recent approval of commercial development in remote foothill areas beyond the Urban Development Boundary, the County of Tulare has essentially opened the door to unregulated development across Three Rivers inaccessible regions of the foothills. The formation of The Kaweah Coalition is a result of the community standing together to demand enforcement of the Foothill Growth Management Plan.



THE KAWEAH COALITION

About The Kaweah Coalition

The Kaweah Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to preserving the rural legacy of the Tulare County foothills through responsible land use planning and advocacy. For more information, visit <http://www.kaweahcoalition.org>

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