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February 22, 2010
Sacramento County Planning Commission
Comments of Friends of the Swainson's Hawk regarding Mustang Airport Permit and EIR

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Friends of the Swainson's Hawk (FOSH) is a non-profit charitable organization concerned with the conservation of wildlife, and particularly raptors, in California.

We agree with the State Lands Commission regarding their finding that the EIR should have been recirculated before the FEIR was completed.

We support the testimony of California Fish and Game, The Nature Conservancy and State Lands Commission regarding the impacts of the requested airport permit on neighboring lands and the species they support.

Regarding specific impacts on Swainson's Hawks, please note that the south Sacramento County area supports nesting at .37 nesting territories per square mile, and the area around Mustang property is in the most dense part of the nesting territory, accounting for 74 percent of the South Sacramento County nesting territories. This compares with typical Swainson's Hawk nesting territories at .14 (Butte County), .09 (Canada) and .07 (New Mexico) nesting territories per square mile. This area is a core reproductive area in California.

Reproductive success of Swainson's Hawks in South County will undoubtedly be affected by issuance of the permit. Noise, urban disturbance, and degradation of habitat values on neighboring lands due to conflicts and resulting regulatory action by air safety agencies will negatively impact Swainson's Hawks in this core reproductive area.

If it approves this permit, the County will be showing bad faith in its relationships with the wildlife regulatory agencies that it depends upon to issue permits for the South County HCP. By allowing incompatible use within the core conservation area of the South County, the County would jeopardize its application for a comprehensive habitat conservation permit for development inside the current urban area.

Please vote to deny the application. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jude Lamare, President, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk

