



Power Generation and Agriculture in Glenn County

Public Workshop





Glenn County Board of Supervisors

- ▶ August 18, 2005 Board of supervisors directed Planning & Public Works Staff to evaluate Glenn County Code Chapter 15.330 Exclusive Agricultural Zone Section 15.330.040 (M) Power Generation with a six month moratorium placed on issuance of permits under this County Code section.
- ▶ September 1, 2015 Planning & Public Works Staff presented a tentative timeline to the Board of Supervisors in which any potential changes to the County Zoning Ordinance could be accomplished
 - ▶ Meet with stakeholders regarding power generation and ag.
 - ▶ Hold a public workshop at the October Planning Commission Meeting on a draft amendment to the Zoning Code
 - ▶ November - Present a Zoning Code amendment to the Planning Commission
 - ▶ December - Take the amendment to the Board of Supervisors

Stakeholders

- ▶ Glenn County Farm Bureau
- ▶ University of California Cooperative Extension
- ▶ Glenn County Agricultural Commissioner



Existing Laws



- ▶ Power Generation in Agricultural Zones has always been a part of the Zoning Code. Currently allowed in Agricultural and Industrial Zones with a Conditional Use Permit. (Title 15, Section 15.330.040 (M) & 15.440.030 (B)(4))
- ▶ General Plan Energy Element provides some guidance on the siting of power generation facilities. (See Section 4.1, et seq.)
- ▶ State and Federal Laws regarding the construction of utility scale power generation facilities.
 - ▶ Williamson Act
 - ▶ California Environmental Quality Act

Existing Policies

- ▶ Glenn County's informal policy is that any installation of structures, equipment or similar facilities for purpose of generating power beyond the needs of the parcel/lot on which it is located requires a Conditional Use Permit.
- ▶ No utility scale power generation facilities in the Williamson Act.
- ▶ Power generation facilities must adhere to all applicable regulatory requirements.



Existing Policies

- ▶ Glenn County General Plan – Natural Resource Policy (NRP)-8, NRP-14, NRP-15, NRP-17
- ▶ Glenn County Code Title 15, Section 15.330.010(B) “To eliminate the encroachment of land uses which are incompatible with the agricultural use of land”
- ▶ Building Permit Policies & Regulations





Issues



- ▶ Agriculture and power generation facilities like to occupy the same space.
 - ▶ Open areas
 - ▶ Less complaints from neighbors
 - ▶ Sun
 - ▶ Access to water
- ▶ Prevailing opinions imply mutual exclusiveness (i.e. they can't coexist)
- ▶ Property Rights
- ▶ Do we want power generation facilities on prime farmland?
- ▶ What is prime farmland?
- ▶ If allowed in agricultural zones, how much land should be allowed for power generation facilities?

Issues

- ▶ Permanent conversion ?
 - ▶ What if they are used conjunctively?
 - ▶ If the lease for the property to be used for power generation is 20 years but the permit runs with the land, is it a “permanent conversion”
- ▶ Reclamation of property?
- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Preserve Agricultural Land vs. Meeting Sustainability Goals



Resolution?



- ▶ Stakeholders agreed that accessory use of power generation facilities to support agricultural operations was acceptable
- ▶ Power generation at a larger scale on agricultural could impact agricultural resources
- ▶ In determining the importance of the farmland in Glenn County, the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program should be used as a guide
- ▶ Power generation is not allowed in Williamson Act lands
- ▶ Impact to the land a better gauge for permitting than power output.



Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program

► Categories

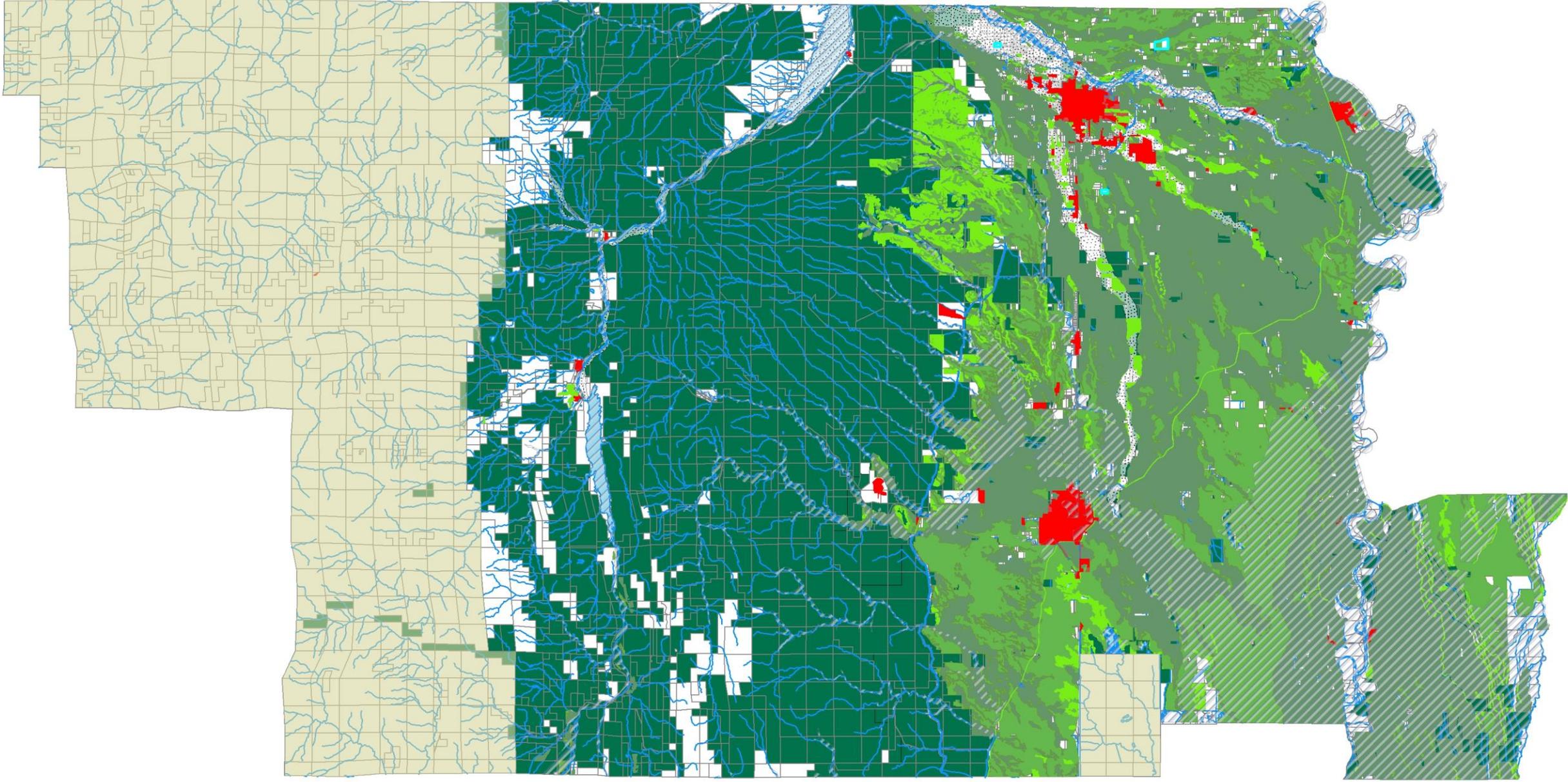
- **Prime Farmland** - Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** - Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland** - Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include nonirrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.



Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program

► Categories

- **Farmland of Local Importance** - Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee. All lands not qualifying for Prime, Statewide, or Unique that are cropped on a continuing or cyclic basis (irrigation is not a consideration). All croplable land within Glenn County water district boundaries not qualifying for Prime, Statewide, or Unique.
- **Grazing Land**- Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.
- **Urban and Built-up Land** - Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.
- **Other Land** - Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.



Proposed Updates

- ▶ AB 2188 Add Section 15.110.200 Small Solar Energy Systems
 - ▶ Streamline Permitting for Roof-top solar energy systems
 - ▶ Reduce Plan Check Time
 - ▶ Reduce Inspections
 - ▶ Allow for Electronic submittal if feasible
 - ▶ Counties implementation is a reflection of staffing and feasibility
 - ▶ Current county permitting is less restrictive than AB 2188 requirements
- ▶ Add Section 15.860
 - ▶ Provide guidelines of where power generation facilities could be permitted
 - ▶ Avoid repetition of state statutes and other codified standards
 - ▶ Remain consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code

