

Development fees are pro-community

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Editor:

As the county seeks to increase the parcel fee charged to landowners to run the landfill by nearly 85%, residents are asking why such a large increase all at once? The significant fee increase is in part due to the county's history of not timely updating fees as costs increase.

While the county is updating this landfill fee to residents, to be fair the county should also update impact fees charged to developers to cover the capital costs of extending other local services to new developments.

The 2019 General Plan calls for the long overdue creation of an impact fee to cover the capital cost of providing law enforcement, fire protection, communications, and emergency services to new developments. However, the county Board of Supervisors has repeatedly refused to establish a timeline to adopt this fee. One of the reasons that the Calaveras Planning Coalition filed a legal challenge to the 2019 General Plan is because the county deferred the adoption of this development impact fee indefinitely.

Deferring this necessary fee significantly harms the average resident who ends up paying the extra costs or enduring the reduction in services. This makes existing residents rightly concerned that new developments will cost them or harm them.

The residents of Calaveras County pay their share for service operations. It is time for the county to require that developers pay their share for capital expansions. Requiring developers to pay fees isn't "anti-growth," it is pro-community. Requiring these fees ensures that each community continues to be a desirable place for existing residents and prospective ones.

If residents are going to be charged updated fees, then it is time that developers pay updated fees as well. If we want to move forward, then we need to pull in the same direction.

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