



## TOPANGA TOWN COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 1085 ♦ TOPANGA, CA 90290 ♦ 310.455.3001 ♦ [www.TopangaTownCouncil.org](http://www.TopangaTownCouncil.org)

June 14, 2025

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Regional Planning Board and Hearing Officer  
Los Angeles County Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Regional Planning Board and Hearing Officer,  
The Topanga Town Council ("TTC") board would like to submit a public comment regarding  
Project No. R2005-01452-(3) | Variance No. 200900001 | Address: 2354 Topanga Canyon  
Boulevard-Significant Ridgeline.

It is rare for the TTC Board to take a position on any individual, private property parcel, but we do so here because of the enormous implications of this particular case for Topanga and the wider Santa Monica Mountains. Most people in this community believe strongly in the sanctity of protecting both private property rights and environmental integrity. If a parcel of land is zoned as residential (and has been for an extended period of time), we generally believe that the owner has the right to build a home on his/her land within the given legal parameters. That said, if regulations exist that constrain said person's ability to develop his/her land, then the parcel owner has a responsibility to try to work within those constraints to the extent feasible and/or to seek a variance or exemption from said regulations before embarking on any work that makes said exemptions a foregone conclusion.

Importantly, we also believe that, when and if a precedent is to be set regarding the granting of a variance for any given project, the conduct of said applicant must be considered before granting any potential variance. People will take undue risks and flagrantly violate the law if they believe that their actions will not result in any meaningful personal consequences. If we do not discourage unlawful behavior, then we inadvertently create a system in which "moral hazard" will prevail. If we had a dime for every developer or polluter who uttered the phrase: "It is better to ask for forgiveness than permission," we'd be retired in Fiji now. We cannot let this cancerous and destructive mindset take hold; otherwise our regulations are pointless and the Santa Monica Mountains will cease to be the pristine habitat that they currently are.

Based on a formal statement from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy ("SMMC" or "the Conservancy"), we have significant reason to believe that the applicant currently seeking a variance for this parcel egregiously encroached on the land of the Conservancy without any regard for that entity's own private property rights. Such a violation should be investigated and factored into any decisions made about this parcel.

If any variance is ever to be granted here, we believe that it should only be granted to those who make a good faith effort to follow our laws and regulations and respect the review and approval process before executing on any project plans that violate our rules and norms. In short, we do not believe that it is prudent to reward those who willfully violate our land use and zoning laws and/or illegally encroach on other entities' private property to satisfy their own objectives.

Lastly, it goes without saying that we live in a highly sensitive environment where conscientiousness about one's actions on the wider community are critical. Everything that we do here has outsized downstream effects, from increasing fire risk to polluting our precious watershed. The people who may deserve a variance are those who show a recognition of those impacts and who make an honest and concerted effort to understand this community and help sustain it.

Respectfully,

*Carrie L. Carrier*

Topanga Town Council, President

Dr. Alisa Land, Vice President

Stacy L. Sledge, Secretary/Treasurer

Roger Pugliese, Government Liaison

Jaspreet Katrib, IT Director

Tam Taylor, Member Emeritus