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General plan to go to voters

El Dorado supervisors place the initiative on the March ballot.

By Cathy Locke -- Bee Staff Writer - (*Published October 23, 2003*)

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to place an initiative on the March ballot that would adopt a county general plan.

Frustrated by the county's delays in approving a blueprint for growth, El Dorado Citizens for Responsible Planning launched the initiative drive in August.

Although under state law the group had 180 days to collect approximately 6,000 signatures, it submitted petitions bearing nearly 10,000 signatures Oct. 1. The county registrar of voters verified the petitions Oct. 14.

The Board of Supervisors and some residents have voiced concern that adopting a general plan at the ballot box -- an approach that some land use experts have termed "novel" -- could be subject to legal challenge because measures adopted by initiative do not have to meet California Environmental Quality Act requirements.

El Dorado County has been operating under a court writ of mandate since 1999 when a Sacramento Superior Court judge ruled that its general plan adopted in 1996 failed to specify the impact that planned residential growth would have on traffic, water supplies and the quality of life in the foothills.

The county has circulated four draft general plan alternatives and accompanying environmental studies and is preparing responses to public comments on those documents.

The plan that will be submitted to voters is similar to one of the alternatives.

About the Writer

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