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El Dorado County Supervisor Sweeney is target of recall drive

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The ever-contentious issue of development in El Dorado County has sparked an effort to recall veteran county Supervisor Jack Sweeney.

A group calling itself Save Our County accuses the Placerville-area supervisor of working with real estate and development interests to dismantle the general plan, the county's blueprint for growth.

"He has repeatedly shown disregard for both the spirit and intent of the 2004 General Plan by introducing and supporting amendments, resolutions and reinterpretations that have effectively eliminated key protections of agricultural, historical, cultural, recreational and natural resources that the general plan was specifically designed to protect," says the notice of intention to recall the supervisor.

At age 71, Sweeney said, "There's nothing developers can do for me that I can't do for myself. I do have things to gain for my community."

He said he has pursued changes needed for the general plan to function as it was intended. He noted, for example, that an amendment to reduce agricultural buffers in some areas was supported by the agricultural community.

Save Our County spokesman Tripp Mikich said the general plan, ratified by voters in 2005, represents a hard-fought battle to reach consensus, and residents have a right to expect that land-use designations and zoning will be respected.

Mikich said Save Our County takes issue with the board majority's argument that changes in the general plan are necessary for economic development and has targeted Sweeney as the most vocal proponent of those changes.

"The Board of Supervisors has a 1950s vision of what economic development is," he said, arguing that more houses and big-box stores won't create a sustainable economy.

"People can't live off of Wal-Mart wages," Mikich said, arguing that the county should capitalize instead on its natural, cultural and historical resources.

Sweeney said he supports citizens' right to seek a recall but questioned why they didn't recruit a candidate to challenge him in 2008.

Sweeney first served on the board from 1985 to 1993. He was elected again in July 2003 to fill the vacancy created by the death of Supervisor Carl Borelli and ran unchallenged in 2004 and

2008.

Save Our County will have 120 days to collect the signatures of at least 3,950 District 3 residents, said Bill Schultz, county registrar of voters. The district includes the city of Placerville, and the communities of Diamond Springs, El Dorado, Camino and most of Cedar Grove.

Schultz said he doubted there was enough time to qualify a recall measure for the November ballot. He estimated a special election would cost between \$57,000 and \$76,000.

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