

Residents to supes: Back off U.N.s Agenda 21

By Chris Daley

Staff writer From page A1 | May 18, 2012 | 11 Comments

El Dorado County's Board of Supervisors Tuesday put off indefinitely further discussion of the controversial Agenda 21. Board Chairman John Knight had agendized a proposed board resolution to "endorse rejection of its radical policies and rejections of any grant monies attached to it."

Knight, however, exercising the chair's prerogative, pulled the item from the agenda and offered it "off calendar" for future consideration. Off-calendar means there is no date certain on which or by which the issue will return to the board's agenda.

Members of the audience and supervisors got testy with each other over the move to "continue" the matter. Several times Knight and Supervisor Jack Sweeney tried to clarify what the board action meant. That is, not to deny the public the opportunity to discuss the specifics of Agenda 21, but rather to hold those discussions at a future time.

Agenda 21 came out of the "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development" in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is commonly referred to as a blueprint or action plan for "sustainable development" worldwide and includes involvement at the global, national and local levels. In its simplest terms, it is predicated on the assumption that much human activity has a potentially deleterious effect on the environment. Agenda 21 (for the 21st century) states that by working together the international community can reduce environmental degradation while improving the lives and prospects of people in the developing world.

40 chapters

A four-section, 40-chapter document, Agenda 21 emphasizes such issues as consumption patterns, use and availability of resources, demographics, financing, health, housing and development in general.

At the state and local level, such issues have informed California's transportation and housing future in the form of Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375. Both of these laws deal with policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by concentrating higher density housing developments in such a way as to significantly increase the use of public transportation.

Opposition to much of the philosophy embodied in Agenda 21 is based on concerns that its foundation rests on "taking from the haves and giving it to the have-nots." That is, subsuming if not confiscating private property to the interests and welfare of an ill-defined majority. In a word, socialism.

Several audience members described Agenda 21 as a threat to the local as well as the American way of life, liberty and the Constitution.

Steve Tyler, who has addressed the board in the past about gold mining and dredging issues said, "We've been remiss in avoiding Agenda 21 whose sole point is to destroy this country, destruction by the corruption of the EPA, department of Fish and Game" and similar agencies.

A number of speakers demanded that the board withdraw the county's membership in the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), which is a regional planning and action group. Some planning and development issues such as housing and transportation are organized and administered through SACOG.

Kathleen Newell urged opposition to the U.N. and Agenda 21, which would otherwise impose socialism and "choke us with regulations" and pushed supervisors to "set a date to have this on the agenda."

Candidate for District 3 supervisor, Sue Taylor, called the Agenda 21 "guide to sustainable development, a threat to our Constitution and a compromise of our independence." She cautioned the board to be careful about acquiescing to "global policy."

Jaimie Beutler had a different take on the matter. She said so much "fear and misunderstanding is sad" and advised that the whole issue should be considered incrementally as specific problems to be addressed. As a whole, she called it simply an "ideological stance" that includes some "darn good ideas."

"Some things are handled better at a regional level and some at the local level, but we all need to work together," Beutler concluded.

Melody Lane of Coloma described Agenda 21 as having "many tentacles" that reach down even into local affairs. And while it represents a "threat to our Constitution," she also stressed that the board should "deal with the realities and not the conspiracies of Agenda 21."

Supervisors eventually voted unanimously to "continue" the matter.

<http://www.mtdemocrat.com/news/residents-to-supes-back-off-u-n-s-agenda-21/>

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