

#21 BOS Rvd 8/25/25
25-1332 publiccomment



Outlook

BOS Meeting 8-26-25 Item 21 (File# 25-1332) Public Comment

From Michael Ranalli <Mike@ranallivineyard.com>

Date Mon 8/25/2025 9:05 AM

To BOS-Clerk of the Board <edc.cob@edcgov.us>

Cc Karen L. Garner <Karen.L.Garner@edcgov.us>; LeeAnne Mila <leeanne.mila@edcgov.us>

📎 1 attachment (150 KB)

BOS 8-26-25 Item 21 (File# 25-1332)_SEED.pdf;

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Madam clerk,

Please include my attached public comment for the BOS Meeting 8-26-25

Item 21 File# 25-1332).

Kind regards, Michael Ranalli

Attention: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors**August 24, 2025****RE: 8/26/25 Agenda Item 21 (File# 25-1332)****Support for SEED Committee's Proposed Analysis and Strategy**

Dear Board Members,

On behalf of the El Dorado County Farm Bureau, I write to express our strong support for the recommendations presented by the Strategic Economic Enhancement Development (SEED) Committee and the Economic Strategy they are proposing. This framework delivers measurable economic returns, sustains local jobs, and strengthens multiple sectors of our rural economy.

Agriculture and tourism are deeply interconnected pillars of El Dorado County's future. Farms, ranches, wineries, and farmers markets depend directly on a healthy visitor industry, which in turn supports restaurants, hotels, transportation providers, medical services, contractors, and agricultural suppliers.

The Strategy outlines a flexible approach to growth that emphasizes residents, rural character, and fiscal sustainability. Without action, the County faces serious economic risks. The report projects a budget shortfall exceeding \$65 million by 2029/30, forcing major cuts to staff and public services.

Key findings from the SEED report include:

- Population decline from 2019–2024, with further loss projected by 2029, especially among younger skilled workers.
- Flat job growth (0.0%) since 2019, compared to 4.1% nationally.
- One-third of children living in households unable to meet basic needs.
- Rising housing costs driven by inflow of residents, leaving essential workers and middle-income families priced out.

The consequences are clear: stagnant job growth and housing pressures risk turning El Dorado County into a commuter- and retirement-dependent economy with reduced vitality and an unsustainable fiscal future.

The County's adopted **General Plan anticipated a coordinated approach** to land and economic policy, with SEED and the Agricultural Commission working in tandem:

- The Agricultural Commission safeguards land, water, and rural resources.
- SEED develops strategies to diversify the economy while supporting those rural protections.

When either body is underutilized, the County risks fragmented decision-making that undermines both agriculture and fiscal stability. We therefore urge the Board to reaffirm SEED's role, ensure alignment with the Agricultural Commission, and support regular updates, joint discussions, and inclusive public workshops.

After a long effort to seat a professional and qualified SEED Committee, the Board directed their recommendations. Now is the time to act. We respectfully ask the Board to adopt their strategy and demonstrate a renewed commitment to agriculture, rural jobs, and sound economic planning.

The Farm Bureau stands ready, alongside partners in agritourism and hospitality, to support this effort in any way that serves the County's long-term wellbeing.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Ranalli



President, El Dorado County Farm Bureau

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Public comment



Outlook

County of El Dorado - File #: 25-1332 - El Dorado County Economic Strategy

From Gordon Helm <grhelm@grhelm.com>

Date Mon 8/25/2025 9:18 AM

To BOS-Clerk of the Board <edc.cob@edcgov.us>

Cc Karen L. Garner <Karen.L.Garner@edcgov.us>

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Dear Members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express my **strong support for the SEED Committee's recommended Economic Strategy** and to urge its immediate adoption and implementation. This forward-thinking plan offers a balanced approach to growth that aligns perfectly with our community's values. It has been crafted with great care and vision – in fact, the strategy itself *"centers our residents, respects our rural character, and ensures fiscal sustainability,"* reflecting a *"collective vision to strengthen economic opportunity, improve quality of life, and protect what makes El Dorado County unique"*. In my view, this is exactly the kind of economic roadmap we need: one that boosts prosperity **while preserving the rural heritage** that defines our county.

A cornerstone of the SEED Economic Strategy is its emphasis on **tourism and visitors to our agricultural lands** – notably through agritourism and **short-term lodging on farms and ranches**. By thoughtfully embracing these opportunities, we can **generate significant economic benefits for our county without compromising our rural character**. The plan recognizes that our farms, vineyards, and orchards are not just scenery – they are destinations. By supporting initiatives like *farm stays, tasting rooms, and local food production*, the County can **"preserve working lands while boosting rural economies and offering unique visitor experiences"**. In other words, encouraging a family to spend a weekend on a local farm or winery is a win-win: it **keeps the land in agricultural use** and lets visitors appreciate our countryside, all while contributing to our economy. Each guest that stays overnight in a farmhouse inn or vineyard cottage is contributing to our tax base through the **transient occupancy tax (TOT)**, and those dollars go directly to the public good. Revenue from TOT is not an abstract figure on a ledger – it is money that *"directly funds essential services like roads, public safety, fire response, parks, and senior services,"* the very things that keep our communities safe and livable. Importantly, this **growth in tourism revenue comes at no cost to our rural way of life**. In fact, as the strategy notes, a *"stable and diversified revenue base enables the County to uphold its commitment to rural preservation... in a manner that aligns with community values"*. In short, by expanding agritourism and rural lodging, we can **strengthen our finances and protect our countryside at the same time**.

Crucially, supporting agritourism and visitor-friendly agricultural lands will **directly benefit our local farmers and small businesses**. When more visitors come to experience El Dorado County's farms, ranches, farmers markets, wineries, and B&Bs, they bring **badly needed income to the families who run these enterprises**. These benefits are not theoretical; they mean that a small orchard in Camino can sustain itself for another generation, or that a South County vintner can hire extra help during harvest. As the El Dorado County Farm Bureau aptly noted, these gains are *"real income for families, real stability*

for small farms and ranches, and real opportunities to showcase El Dorado County to the world". In welcoming guests to our agricultural properties, we're also creating new customers for local produce stands, restaurants, artisans, and tour operators. Each dollar spent by a tourist at a family farm or rural business circulates through our local economy – supporting jobs, boosting sales for vendors, and **reinforcing the viability of rural lifestyles**. Moreover, the **TOT revenue collected from overnight farm stays and country cottage rentals is essentially a reinvestment by visitors in our community**, funding the public services and infrastructure that benefit both residents and businesses. This dynamic helps us diversify our economy and takes pressure off residential taxpayers, all while celebrating and sustaining the small businesses that give El Dorado its character.

Just as important, the **SEED Economic Strategy reflects our community's deepest values of rural preservation, close-knit community, and responsible stewardship**. Our county has long cherished its **open spaces, agricultural heritage, and small-town feel**, and this plan is designed to uphold those qualities even as we pursue economic vitality. The strategy explicitly emphasizes *"balancing rural preservation with targeted, value-aligned growth"* so that we **unlock new opportunities without losing what makes this place special**. Put simply, this is not a push for unchecked development – it's a plan to **foster growth that fits our community**. It was developed through extensive collaboration with local stakeholders and reflects the voices of residents, farmers, and business owners alike. The result is a set of initiatives that **promote fiscal health and entrepreneurship in ways that honor our rural character and community identity**. We will be investing in sectors that make sense for us – like agritourism, outdoor recreation, and specialty agriculture – which the strategy rightly identifies as industries of focus that *align with local values*. By focusing on these areas, the plan ensures that economic progress doesn't come at the expense of our landscape or lifestyle. On the contrary, it **leverages what we value most – our farms, forests, and foothills – as assets that can generate revenue and opportunity**. This alignment with community values means the strategy is something our residents can get behind and be proud of, because it resonates with what we all want: a **thriving economy and a preserved countryside, together**.

For all these reasons, I strongly encourage you to **fully endorse and swiftly implement the SEED Committee's Economic Strategy**. The benefits of acting now are clear and compelling. By moving forward, we will see **immediate gains** – such as increased TOT receipts, energized local businesses, and momentum in our tourism sector – while also setting the stage for **long-term fiscal stability and rural preservation** in El Dorado County. We have an opportunity to secure a stable financial future that avoids painful service cuts and keeps our budget healthy; indeed, the data behind this plan shows that doing nothing would *"likely result in a growing gap between County revenue and expenses, necessitating more cuts to County services"*. Adopting the SEED strategy is a proactive step to **prevent that outcome** and ensure we remain on solid footing. It is a blueprint for a **balanced, resilient future**, where we cultivate prosperity from our strengths – our land, our people, and our heritage – instead of sacrificing them. I firmly believe that by following this strategy, **economic vitality and rural character can advance hand in hand**, to the benefit of all who call El Dorado County home.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. I appreciate the Board's leadership and dedication to our county's well-being. I am confident that, with your support, the **vision laid out by the SEED Economic Strategy will become a reality** – one where **El Dorado County grows stronger economically while remaining the special rural community we all cherish**. I urge you to vote in favor of the SEED Committee's recommended Economic Strategy and to move forward with its implementation **without delay**, for the good of our county's present and future.

Sincerely,
Gordon Helm
Madrone Tree Hill, Camino