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No on Prop X. Santee measure is more ballot box planning

Opinion

As Santee voters prepare go to the polls on Tuesday to decide the fate of Proposition X, a measure that aims to kill new home building in the community of nearly 54,000, they might consider a new report by the state Department of Finance.

It explodes the myth that local population growth is being driven primarily by people moving to Santee and other San Diego County municipalities from other parts of the country.

In fact, nearly two-thirds of current growth in San Diego is attributable to a natural increase in the population. That is, there are more yearly births than deaths, meaning that housing demand will increase whether no-growth activists like it or not.

That's why Proposition X is such a short-sighted measure. If approved, several thousand acres of developable land will be effectively taken out of circulation. And 1,400 to 1,800 homes at Fanita Ranch and Rattlesnake Mountain, currently allowable under Santee's general plan, will not be built.

That suits supporters of the Santee ballot measure just fine. Most, no doubt, already own property in the community, where the median price of a single-family resale home increased by a staggering 26 percent last year, according to a recent re-

port by DataQuick Information Systems.

But the sons and daughters, or grandsons and granddaughters, of Santee's residents are not yet property owners. And all too many will find themselves priced out of the community in which their parents or grandparents live if Proposition X is approved by the voters.

That may be why the sponsors of Proposition X, a group that calls itself Preserve Wild Santee, which has received much of the financial backing for its campaign from the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity, has had little to say about the housing issue as they promote the measure's passage.

Instead, they urge Santee voters to approve the measure on grounds that it would somehow protect Miramar Marine Corps Air Station from being closed and a new civilian airport being opened in its place, and that the measure would supposedly prevent traffic gridlock.

Those claims could not be further from the truth. The passage or rejection of Proposition X will have no bearing whatsoever on Miramar's future. Decisions on military bases are solely in the hands of the federal government.

As to gridlock, Proposition X does nothing whatsoever to reduce traffic. What will alleviate traffic is the completion of state Route 52 to state Route 67 -- which was ensured by the half-cent sales tax

extension approved by voters last November -- as well as additional travel lanes on state Route 52 to and from Interstate 15.

It so happens that the sponsors of Proposition X gathered enough signatures to place the measure before the voters last November, along with Transnet and other ballot propositions. However, they chose to delay submitting their petitions in order to ensure Tuesday's special election -- at a cost of \$200,000 to Santee taxpayers -- hoping that a low turnout would work to their benefit.

Santee voters should not allow the sponsors of Proposition X to get away with such a cynical ploy, with such a misleading campaign for the measure. They should vote No on Tuesday.