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Spitzer Declines to Support Saddle Crest Appeal

Board of Supervisors will not appeal a judge's ruling against a proposed 65-home development in Trabuco Canyon.

(Santa Ana, CA) — Supervisor Todd Spitzer said Tuesday that the Board of Supervisors will not support an appeal of a judge's ruling against a proposed 65-home development, known as Saddle Crest, in Trabuco Canyon.

The project was approved in October 2012 and a coalition of environmental groups and canyon activists filed a lawsuit against the county, the Board and the developer – all before Spitzer was elected Third District Supervisor. The suit argued that the County violated the Foothill Trabuco Specific Plan, passed in 1991, by amending several key elements of the Specific Plan.

"To have to make significant and dramatic changes to the Specific Plan, which would stretch way beyond the Saddle Crest parcel, is a discussion that deserves a full vetting," Spitzer said.

The coalition won its law suit in July, with a decision on whether or not to support an appeal coming before the Board Tuesday in closed session.

"I'm absolutely committed to protecting the rural character of the Canyons," Spitzer said. "This isn't just about Saddle Crest. This is about the entire Specific Plan area."

Spitzer plans to ask County staff to review the Specific Plan to see if it needs updating.

"It will be an academic and practical exercise based upon science, biology and resource management – and not associated with a particular project," he said. "We should be having these discussions in the abstract in terms of what is in the best interest of the Specific Plan and protecting the rural character of the Canyons."