



LISA BARTLETT
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**March 22, 2018 STATUS CONFERENCE STATEMENT REQUESTING
JUDICIAL RELIEF**

Your Honor, thank you for arranging this status conference today.

For the record, my name is Lisa Bartlett, Orange County Supervisor for the Fifth District.

COMMITMENT AND TRACK RECORD TO SOLVING HOMELESSNESS

If you are looking for commitment and results for solving homelessness, I have delivered both in my tenure as an elected official. I consistently work toward permanent supportive housing solutions to end homelessness:

- Having learned about opportunities to program Mental Health Services Acts dollars early in my career, I attempted many times to program funds toward permanent supportive housing. The Board eventually allocated an initial \$5 million in July 2017 and additional \$15 million in January 2018;
- I am the only member of the Board of Supervisors who is on the Leadership Council for the United Way campaign called United to End Homelessness;
- The County is working in concert with the Association of California Cities – Orange County, other non-profit organizations, and prominent private citizens on an effort to build 2,700 permanent supportive housing units in Orange County. I am personally supportive and working on this initiative;
- In December 2017, I garnered the unanimous approval by the CalOptima Board of Directors to explore the rezoning of a CalOptima-owned commercial office site in the City of Orange to permanent supportive housing.

For the matter at hand, I wanted to provide a status report on the agreement from March 19, which the Board of Supervisors ratified on a 4-1 vote. I can show evidence that the agreement, in its current form, does not put the County on a trajectory that would result in sustainable housing solutions for the homeless.

MARCH 19th BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

During the March 19th Board of Supervisors meeting, I expressed reservations about feasibility and safety of the Laguna Niguel site. That site is the former South Orange County Justice Center. While it is 22-acres, it is also occupied by a dilapidated building littered with asbestos and mold. There are also heavy areas of brush with potential fire risk. Moreover, I had concerns for children at the child care center (KinderCare) located directly across the street from the site, OC Public Library, and for the 600 students at Moulton Elementary nearly half a mile away. My initial instinct was to oppose. In hindsight, I should have remained in opposition in order to address these issues with you at the earliest possible time.

Likewise, there remain significant environmental issues at the former Huntington Beach landfill that appear to be wholly incompatible with any residential activity.

There are many things that crossed my mind as I changed my vote to *Yes*:

- Make the effort to give our partner agencies a chance at having local control over the time, place, and manner of our homeless solutions or face court order;
- Having the weight of the well-being of 3.2 million residents, I am concerned about the immediate and long-term impacts of homelessness;
- Confidence that any implementation could be managed with existing resources, and with the recent success of the Kramer Bridges Shelter that we could implement a very safe and reliable program under other circumstances;
- Lastly, I always keep in mind several tragic and compelling personal stories of individuals and families burdened with homelessness.

Those witnessing the March 19 meeting understood I had many internal conflicts, and that I made a hasty decision. Upon considered reflection, I am requesting certain reasonable and appropriate modifications of the current agreement so that we may get back on track. We need to achieve a solution for homelessness, but it will never be accomplished without a foundation of trust.

EROSION OF TRUST WILL SLOW PROGRESS ON REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

My constituents in Laguna Niguel have legitimate concerns and are demanding an immediate remedy.

My office has logged thousands of calls, voicemails, emails, and social media posts. I addressed this issue head on by spending four hours at a Laguna Niguel City Council meeting receiving criticism and accepting responsibility from over 600 residents in attendance. I made the best effort I could to assuage their concerns, but there remain legitimate public safety risks if the site is even a remote option for homeless sheltering. A rushed agreement between plaintiffs and defendants has resulted in a significant breach of trust with the public.

Fundamentally, the legislative process is slow, but it's built on transparency, trust, and compromise. Elected officials in this county have a proven track record of successful collaboration in the policy areas of transportation and water resources. I firmly believe the same can be achieved with housing and homelessness.

The requisite trust to accomplish great things is in jeopardy. It will continue to evaporate with three cities either approving or considering litigation against the County. At this point, they are understandably uncooperative because they believe the County has imposed an undesirable action on them. It is anticipated that the litigating cities will file California

Environmental Quality Act challenges, which are clearly within the jurisdiction of State Court. In such cases there would be no meaningful ability to engage in a consolidated discussion about long-term regional housing solutions.

The County, cities, and those experiencing homelessness are clearly in a no-win scenario as the agreement currently stands.

REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL RELIEF

For these reasons, I am petitioning the Court to consider the following:

Option A:

1. Suspend the development of homeless operational plans for the cities of Laguna Niguel, Huntington Beach, and Irvine; **OR**

Option B:

1. Remove the Laguna Niguel option due to public safety risks; and
2. Remove the Huntington Beach option due to environmental and health risks; and
3. Consider programming of a maximum of 400 beds at the Irvine 100-acre site because:
 - a. The City of Irvine zoned the site as Institutional; and
 - b. The City of Irvine has designated any Institutional zoning for emergency shelters in compliance with Senate Bill 2; and
 - c. Therefore, the City of Irvine has pre-approved the site for by right development for emergency shelters via it's housing element, zoning code, and pre-annexation agreement; and
 - d. The site has 100-acres to practically accommodate a centralized emergency shelter housing and support service center; and

With that said, the Irvine 100-acre site should only be utilized on a short-term basis.

Ongoing Commitments

Regardless of the proposals (Option A or B), the County has committed the following:

1. The County will continue the programming for \$70.5 million of Mental Health Services Act funds towards permanent supportive housing; and
2. The County will continue to extend motel vouchers on a case-by-case basis up to \$2.0 million; and
3. The County will continue offering over 500 shelter beds that are available.

You have my personal commitment that I will continue to work with all stakeholders to seek out any opportunity to develop permanent supportive housing in my district and report back to you with our progress.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.