

**SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

December 15, 2014

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: Ordinance restricting oversized vehicles on certain County roads and tour buses from residential streets within West Marin and Tam Valley

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors,

We support reducing cars in our area with the use of shuttles that are appropriately sized to ensure safety on the narrow, windy and crowded roads and that originate from points of origin like San Francisco, the East bay and Northern Counties.

We commend you for your proposed ordinance to restrict oversized vehicles and tour buses on certain County roads and from residential streets. The ordinance is a step in the right direction. However, we believe it needs revision.

Your Board has acknowledged that certain roads, because of their topography, narrow lanes and substandard site distances are unsafe for large vehicles. It also recognizes complaints from residents whose neighborhoods have been used by tour buses going to Muir Woods. The large buses create conditions both unsafe and unhealthy for residents, especially children who have been encouraged to walk and bike to school.

For such hazards to be avoided, the oversized vehicles and tour buses need to be limited to an overall length of approximately 25' shuttles/jitneys to allow for travel on single lane curvaceous roads that are used by other vehicles and bikes. The exact overall length of the buses should be based on a safety standard.

An example was witnessed yesterday in which a bus, which was less than 36', drove across the yellow dividing line, halfway into the oncoming lane to avoid proximity with several bicyclists on its right, and continued in this way even around mountain curves! 36' is not acceptable or safe as a standard limit on overall length of vehicles. Such large buses cannot pass each other on curves, can't backup with cars behind them and have no usable pullouts and therefore they could block emergency vehicles. Such length would continue the existing unsafe road conditions endangering other motorists, bikers and wildlife. Such an

ordinance would negate its intent to create safe travel conditions on Marin roads.

In addition, if transit companies are to adhere to prohibition of travel on neighborhood streets, then the fines will have to be higher to deter their violation. The low fines coupled with the challenge of enforcement of this ordinance would do little to discourage such travel.

The ordinance should prohibit oversized vehicles and the use of loud speakers on all residential streets in Tam Valley and Almonte. In particular, Tennessee Valley Rd should be added to the restricted list of streets as it leads to Marin Avenue and Flamingo, which are both listed as restricted. A driver exiting onto Tennessee Valley Road and then attempting to turn around at this intersection would create serious hazards to residents, especially bikers and pedestrians utilizing the new path to go to school.

Conclusion:

It is particularly urgent for public health and safety that allowable shuttle/bus length be reduced, especially with a major portion of Highway #1 being closed for the next several months and the existing alternate roads being in poor condition with limited access and egress concerns.

Therefore, we request that adoption of this ordinance be postponed until it can be rewritten. We urge you to revise the ordinance to immediately prohibit motor vehicles in excess of an overall length of approximately 25 feet from specified County roads and residential neighborhoods and increase associated fines. The exact overall length of the buses should be based on a safety standard. Moreover, in Tam Valley and Almonte, tour shuttles/buses should be limited to travel only on Hwy 1, banned from all residential streets and prohibited from use of loud speakers.

Thank you for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton

Chairperson

Sustainable TamAlmonte