



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Patrick S. Blacklock
County Administrator

Beth Gabor
Manager of Operations & Strategy

625 Court Street, Room 202 ▪ Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8042 ▪ FAX (530) 668-4029
www.yolocounty.org

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Public Information Officer
(530) 666-8042 [w] ▪ (530) 219-8464 [c]

Yolo County Files Lawsuit to Ensure Safety at Planned Indian Health Service Treatment Center

(Woodland, CA) – The County of Yolo has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court seeking a court order to enjoin the U.S. Indian Health Service from constructing a planned substance abuse treatment center in rural Yolo County until safety hazards from the center are fully addressed.

The Indian Health Service is a federal agency that is proposing to build a 40,000 square foot Youth Regional Treatment Center in an agricultural area without any municipal services. The site would be located on County Road 31, a busy two-lane road between Davis and Winters. The Indian Health Service commissioned a traffic study that showed building the facility would risk rear-end collisions and t-bone crashes when patients, staff and visitors enter and leave the facility. The traffic study mandated the construction of a left-turn lane and right-turn pocket at the facility entrance.

Even though its own traffic study required the construction of safety improvements, the Indian Health Service refuses to build them, claiming it needs congressional approval. Senator Feinstein and Congressman Garamendi wrote a letter to the Indian Health Service urging it “not to risk serious injury or a fatality by declining to seek funding for this improvement.” Nonetheless, the Indian Health Service has said it would rather “pick your poison” and rely on “optimism” when construction begins in 2018, rather than install safe road access as part of the project.

“The county is supportive of this much-needed treatment facility and would be proud to have the facility located in Yolo County,” Yolo County Supervisor Don Saylor, whose district includes County Road 31. “But, the Indian Health Service chose a site with significant constraints. If the Indian Health Service refuses to build adequate safety measures, then we need to protect the safety of children being treated at the facility, the staff members working there and everyone who uses the road. Providing safe access to the site is a necessary and appropriate cost. Public safety cannot be an afterthought.”

The lawsuit is brought under the National Environmental Quality Act, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Declaratory Relief Act.

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