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December 8, 2009

Mr. Richard Elias, Chairman
Pima County Board Of Supervisors
130 West Congress, 11th Floor
Tucson AZ 85701

Dear Chairman Elias:

At the outset, I should mention that the views expressed in this letter are my own and not necessarily those of the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee or any member of the Committee.

The Pima County Bond Advisory Committee has been meeting regularly for over two years in an effort to develop a comprehensive, regionally balanced, fiscally prudent and financially supportable package of bond projects to recommend to the Board of Supervisors for presentation to the voters of Pima County in the next general election. Bond Committee members have spent thousands of hours evaluating hundreds of projects that are essential to the current residents and future generations of our community. Without these very important and necessary projects, we will be unable to maintain the special quality of life we currently enjoy and our children and grandchildren will be left without the basic cultural, recreational and community facilities and natural beauty that we take for granted.

It was therefore with concern that I read Supervisor Ray Carroll's November 24, 2009 Memorandum concerning County bonded indebtedness. We have several Bond Committee meetings already scheduled. I understand that this correspondence was from one Supervisor. However, I have concerns that this may represent the position of other members, and perhaps a majority of the Board of Supervisors. If so, it would be a waste of time and unfair to the members of the Bond Committee for us to continue to meet. More importantly, it would be unfair to the hundreds of citizens who have been attending and speaking at our meetings who are anticipating a positive recommendation from the Bond Committee to the Board of Supervisors for a bond election next year.

During the Call to the Audience portion of its last two meetings, the Bond Committee heard more than 4.5 hours of testimony from speakers representing all segments and geographic areas of our community. Their message was loud and consistent: there are tremendous unmet needs for cultural, recreational, and community facilities; open space and habitat protection and infrastructure improvements throughout Pima County. They understand that bonding to finance these improvements will affect their secondary property tax rates yet they have pledged their support for a future bond election. In fact, not one of the 112 people who addressed the Committee spoke against holding a bond election in 2010.

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We have received thousands of emails and letters in support of individual projects and for a bond election. During the last meeting, the Bond Committee received petitions signed by more than 1,100 people from the Vail area urging support for projects in their area and requesting that they be placed on the 2010 General Election ballot.

Supervisor Carroll urges a "pay as you go" policy for financing community needs. It would be helpful to know if this is the policy of the Board of Supervisors so that we can readjust our meeting schedule. In my opinion, however, current market conditions would suggest the opposite as the most logical course. With interest rates and construction costs at all-time lows, we should seize the opportunity to build improvements now that will be available for generations to come.

Bond financing is the most effective and fair means of providing our children and grandchildren with the basic amenities that our parents provided for us. The Bond Committee has been extremely diligent in recognizing the realities of today's financial situation. That is why we will undoubtedly recommend that, as has been done by the Board of Supervisors in the past, an absolute ceiling be placed on the secondary property tax rate. This ensures that the tax burden on County property owners never becomes onerous or excessive.

The Bond Committee has been cautious in its approach to a possible bond election next year. We have been closely monitoring regional economic conditions and secondary property valuations. The Committee is mindful that uncertainty and doubt over future tax revenues could result in a recommendation to delay (but hopefully not abandon) the holding of a bond election. We will continue to follow economic trends very closely. If we recommend a bond program to the Board of Supervisors, I am confident that it will be one that is conservative and fiscally supportable by projected tax revenues without unduly burdening the property owners of Pima County.

If, however, the general sentiment of the Board of Supervisors is that bonding for public improvements is no longer the favored approach, in fairness to the Bond Committee members, we should postpone all future meetings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

HECKER & MUEHLEBACH, PLLC



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