

El Dorado County Farm Trails – 2024 County Supervisor Candidate Questions

Gary Martin - District 3 Candidate

1. With the County's on-going struggle to fund its budget, how would you propose to either reduce the County's expenditures and/or increase the County's revenues? What services could be reduced or cut, to reduce expenditures? Where and how might revenues be increased?

Answer: El Dorado County up until borrowing for the Sheriff's building has been fiscally conservative in keeping the county out of debt. I would like to see that the County stay that way. I would ask that the Board meet with each department to strategize on ways to cut expenses. If departments are income generators, I think the Board needs to ask what tools they may need to be more productive. I think we need to encourage more small business, high-tech jobs and tourism that bring more value to our residents and communities. We need to stay diversified and not depend on just one industry for our economic health.

2. What is your position on the proposed Costco development in EDH and why? What benefits & drawbacks do you see this project having on EDC?

Answer: I feel that building a Costco in EDH does more to increase Costco profits than help EDC residents. The number of new jobs it will supply is not substantial enough as well as the wages they offer to outweigh the traffic issues it will create on Silva Parkway in my opinion. We need to retain our sense of place and focus on being self-sustaining by encouraging more local businesses and farms in order to keep the income that is generated inside the county.

3. In the last couple of years, the Planning and Building Dept has come under scrutiny to the point of there even being a Grand Jury investigation. What are your thoughts on the results of this investigation, the current BOS' response to this, and what would you do to improve the shortcomings of this department?

Answer: I feel the Grand Jury investigation into the Planning and Building Departments shortcomings was thorough and addressed the complaints about the department. It seems that the Board should require more from the Planning Department to create a more user-friendly service for the public. It also sounds like the departments need a better intake and process IT system. Part of the problem is the meddling over the years by the Board of Supervisors, preventing implementation of policies that should have been clarified after the 2004 General

Plan was approved. Does not help the planning process when the Board keeps changing the rules.

4. Would you support the building of the proposed Alder Creek Dam? What are the benefits or detriments of this project as you see it?

Answer: I am in support of building Dams in our County. Water storage is an important asset in my opinion. Dams also provide recreational areas to our county as well as another water location for fire suppression air crews to access in the event of a wildfire. We just need to make sure that the project will be a benefit to the County residents and businesses, and that the project can be done without a major impact to the ratepayers and communities in which they are placed. I would need more information before weighing in on this specific project.

5. Wildfires are an ongoing concern for the citizens of EDC. CalFire has implemented what some might consider very restrictive and even intrusive regulations. The County is also looking at codifying its own set of fire prevention regulations. Do you feel this is appropriate, or not, and why?

Answer: I am very concerned with the wildfire problem in our county and have been for the almost 50 years as an EDC resident. I have personally cleared property myself and my family has owned, only to have an adjoining property owner refuse to comply with basic fire safety clearing. CalFire and the County needs be involved as well as State & Federal authorities with this matter. The County also needs to demand financial assistance from the State, Federal and Utility companies to assure we as a county is as prepared as possible for the next wildfire. This financial assistance can be used to help our communities with the costs of these projects. I do not think that the County should be adding any more regulations than what the State is implementing.

6. Do you support the concept of a 'constitutional' sheriff? Why or why not?

Answer: I support the concept of our county having a constitutional sheriff. The federal government as well as our state have a long history of overreach that doesn't always align with the thoughts and wishes of the residents of our county. Having a sheriff willing to stand up to unconstitutional state and federal laws, therefore protecting and defending the residents of our county, is commendable in my opinion. I do however feel that there needs to be feedback from the residents on matters of safety in our county. Like every elected official the citizens should stay engaged to make sure these powers are kept in check.

7. Recently, the Ranch Marketing Ordinance has been under scrutiny because of the accessory uses allowed to ranchers and farmers “by right” such as non-agriculture events. In some circumstances land owners were taking advantage of the fact that specific use definitions were not defined. Do you feel that the matter is covered appropriately now or do you feel it needs to be explored more?

Answer: It appears that the new ordinance closed the loopholes for those that took advantage of the definitions that were not defined. I did not see that people from the industry opposed to the modified ordinance. If the industry finds that it has become too impacting, I would work with the industry to make further improvements.