

TESTIMONY TO THE CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 18, 2001

I am George Lockyer and along with my wife, Debbie, we own the property at 13800 Yankee Hill Road known as the Penterman Farmyard, E-53 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). We have resided at this home for the past 21 years. My testimony is to address two issues; one is why I do support the recommendation of denial to the far-east beltway alternative and the other issue is the concern of urban sprawl or urbanization of the Stevens Creek area.

I do strongly support the denial of the far-east beltway for it would have a huge impact upon our farmstead, which is eligible for the National Registry of Historical Properties. The beltway is described on page H.10 and 11 of the DEIS as being 600 feet from our closest building and 350 feet from our property line. In the description of adverse effects, the beltway is noted to have in one paragraph "an adverse visual effect" and in another paragraph it states, "the EF-1 alternative will dominate the view from the property." Attached are pictures of the current view of the area that is designated to be the beltway from the middle of our property that indeed validates the domination and drastic change to the landscape and beauty of the area. This change goes beyond view but impacts the meaning and intrinsic value of the whole countryside and shifts the feeling of a rural farmstead to an urbanized setting.

Described also about our property in the adverse effects is that there would be "no noise impact based upon guidelines and criteria established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)." We find that absurd and strongly disagree with their conclusion. I do not fault the engineer who did the report but call the criteria faulty and flawed. Reasons screams that a four-lane beltway with over 15,000 vehicles per day, traveling at approximately 65 miles per hour, 350 to 700 feet away, is a dramatic audible change from the sound of less than one hundred cars per day and the activity of birds and our farmstead animals that we presently hear. As part of my preparation daily as a Pastor at Faith Bible Church, I spend time in prayer, quiet reflection, and study. My favorite quiet place is the front porch which I can usually endure the weather for six months. The present audible setting of our area allows me to enjoy intimacy and meaning with the Creator by often just reflecting on the sounds of creation about me. The beltway that close will only remind me in quiet times of what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes chapter 5, verse 4, "And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

In addition to the noted adverse effects, the building of the EF-1 beltway calls for an overpass to be built at the Yankee Hill Road interchange. Right of way for this overpass does fall upon our property right up to our horse corrals. The solution suggested calls for a moving of Yankee Hill Road to the south so the overpass will not impede our property, but this solution calls for the moving of our neighbor's house as the road then runs over them. This is a lose-lose situation.

My second issue is the urbanization of the Stevens Creek area. Though the term of "urban sprawl" has been used in prior testimony, I noted in my reading of the DEIS that the area will not be a product of urban sprawl because it will follow a plan, implying that it is only urban sprawl if the development is unplanned. The DEIS however does state that urbanization will occur in the statement "urbanization of the basin and other fringe areas will occur according to approved Subarea Plans." This clearly tells us that the intention of the City of Lincoln is to expand its borders to our area. This process has indeed begun for as we meet, bulldozers are preparing ground up to 98th Street that only 7 months ago was busy with combines for harvest and now will be the largest commercial site in Lancaster County. With the completion of the South Pointe Shopping Center, much of the commercial energy of the City of Lincoln is being placed on the outer edges of the city. In

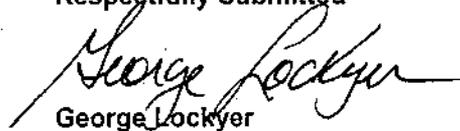
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the span of the next year or two, I will have no need to go beyond 70th Street except once every four years to renew my driver's license. I am not by any means an expert on urban affairs, but the little I have researched has indicated that the City of Lincoln may be in danger of losing its inner-city strength in the long run. The loss of some major businesses in the recent past may be a sign of what is to come. The DEIS goes on to state that "the development of a beltway will likely result in more pressure for urbanization in the area." The middle route of the beltway will be less than two miles from the new commercial center and the Far East alternative less than three. The pressure for urbanization will indeed be there destroying our rural way of life in the area. It was only a few years ago that we had fought the development of a small aircraft airstrip along with a cluster of homes next to the airstrip on 134th Street. The County Commissioners at that time rejected the plan because it was inappropriate and would adversely effect the rural setting of the area. The beltway by all means fits that same criterion.

If the need of the beltway were compelling, my objection would be self-serving in only wanting to protect my property. But, I believe I speak for many residents of the Stevens Creek area that are not convinced that a real need for a beltway system justify the destruction of our rural setting, taking of farmland, and the movement of homes; plus the cost of the system which eventually comes from the people.

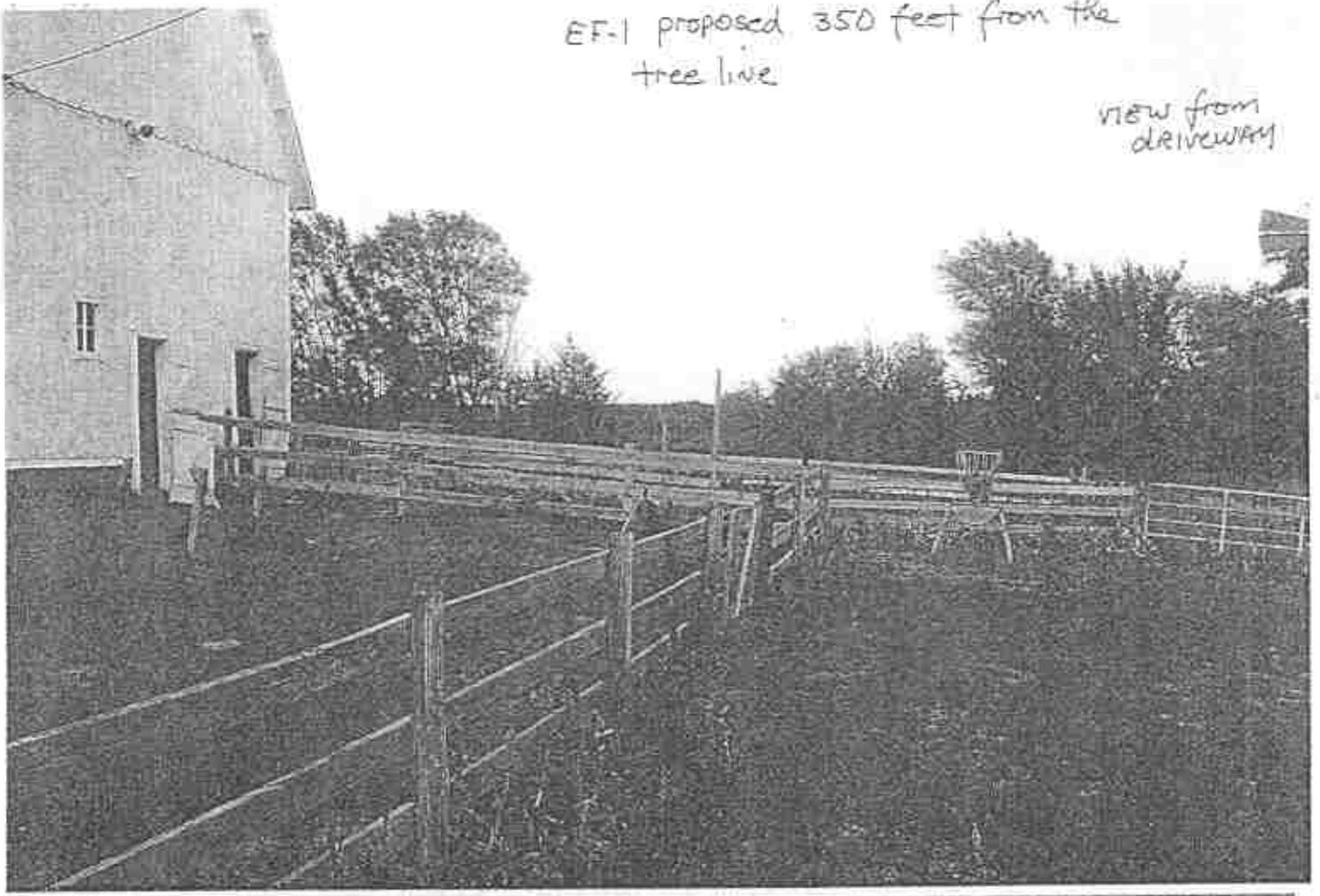
Again, I support the decision to deny the proposed Far East (EF-1) beltway alternative and thank you for the opportunity to express myself at this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted


George Lockyer

EF-1 proposed 350 feet from the tree line

view from driveway



Proposed EF-1
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