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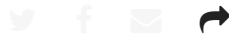
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COMMUNITY COLUMNS

Modesto's Measure I seeks to protect area's best soils, water recharge areas

By Denny Jackman

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Why Measure I? Air, water, food, repeat.

From that welcoming bottom spank, we all require the same things in the same order to maintain life. We have done a great job in California cleaning our air. Though I remember the awe of the orange sunsets of the early 1970s, I prefer the view of our Coast Range and the knowledge that each breath is cleaner.

Our water, though seemingly in short supply, is of good quality and maintained at the highest standards. Our food is relatively cheap and abundant and remains so because of incredible farmers, distribution systems, and the farmland that produces the best product for the best price.

Stanislaus County has a bounty of highly productive soils, made possible by three rivers and tens of thousands of years of flooding and receding waters that have deposited deep layers of incredibly rich soils in our valley. These high-quality soils make possible the retention and replenishment of nutrients for crop production.

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Many of these soils also are permeable enough to allow water to seep through and recharge our aquifers below. Based on a 2006 study by the Modesto Irrigation District and the city of Modesto, our highest water recharge areas are north of Modesto. Additionally, and not surprisingly, those same soils are rated among the top quality soils on Earth.

So, when my grandparents and thousands of other immigrants moved to the Central Valley to continue their lives in farming, they found rewards in our Mediterranean climate and bounty from investments in our irrigation systems. My mother and father were born on the farm but weaned from it by choice and challenge; they raised four young urbanites, all in Modesto.

Measure I is “Intentional”! It places “intentional” urban boundaries on the city of Modesto. Here’s why: The western boundary (Morse Road extension) is to secure

from development valuable, high-quality, food-producing soil with canal irrigation and over 100 years of Wood Colony cultural heritage. This border was established by a 1972 agreement between the city of Modesto and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Only a small portion of Wood Colony is within Modesto's Sphere of Influence document, adopted in 2010. Under Measure I, all of the area would be protected.

The southern boundary is the current general plan and sphere-of-influence boundary along Whitmore Avenue, bordering the city of Ceres west of Highway 99 and the Tuolumne River east of Highway 99.

The partial eastern boundary is an extension of Church Street from the Tuolumne River to Dry Creek. North of Dry Creek, there is *no restriction* on development on the lesser eastern soils.

The northern boundary runs along Claribel and Kiernan roads to Dale Road as an urban limit. The north area contains extremely high quality soils and one of the highest water recharge areas in the entire county. At Dale Road, the development restriction changes to a residential urban limit.

The residential urban limit is bounded by Dale Road on the east, Pirrone Road on the north, Sisk Road on the west, and Pelandale Road on the south. This area is restricted to industrial uses such as business parks and commercial development.

Yes, Measure I is *Intentional*. We think voters on Nov. 3 *intend* not to urbanize our most profitable, food-producing, water-recharging areas. I am one of nearly 10,000 other urbanites who signed petitions to place Measure I on the ballot. Aye on I!

Denny Jackman is author of Measure I, a former Modesto city councilman and board member of the Central Valley Farmland Trust.

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