

The Yolo County cabal

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Issue date: 1/10/06 Section: [Opinion](#)

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Last month, Yolo County Judge Timothy Fall approved Yolo County's eminent domain proceedings to force the sale of Conaway Ranch and set a June trial date for determining the price of the property.

The county's land grab - using the power to take private property for public use with just compensation - is a hideous abuse of its 'takings' power enumerated in the Fifth Amendment.

In the Conaway Ranch case, the public use is nothing. As justification, Yolo County Supervisors declared Conaway Ranch a "public treasure" and invoked the specter of "out-of-town land speculators" buying a "county treasure" to sell the property's water rights and build thousands of homes. The message from Yolo County Supervisors is clear: If you are deemed an "out-of-town speculator," your property rights do not count.

County Supervisors Helen Thomson, Mike McGowan and Mariko Yamada claim that confiscating Conaway Ranch from the legal owners serves the "public interest." What is the "public interest"? Does it include abandoning the one true purpose of government: to protect the rights of citizens?

The impetus for the Yolo County Supervisors' land grab is the destructive Yolo County policy of "protecting agricultural land." To achieve the misguided and ignoble goal of "preserving open space," the county is destroying rights. Conaway Ranch is the crowning achievement for the extremist anti-growth lobby in Yolo County.

The supervisors and their supporters sneer that the Conaway Preservation Group, the legal owners of Conaway Ranch, are "profiteers" who do not care about the people of Yolo County. All of the rhetoric coming from the county and its supporters smacks of outright Marxist propaganda. Indeed, California Assemblywoman Lois Wolk said that "the people of Yolo County will control their own destiny when it comes to Conaway Ranch." Translation: We are taking the property from the bourgeois land-owners and returning it to the proletariat.

Unfortunately, Yolo County supervisors have the tacit endorsement of California Senator Mike Machado, the outright gleeful endorsement of Wolk and financial backing from the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians.

Actually, Yolo County can't afford this land grab. The supervisors pledged not to use general funds and the Rumsey band joined the cabal by offering to finance the land grab. For its role, the Rumsey band should be ashamed and immediately withdraw its offer. A

'good neighbor' is not complicit in violating others' rights.

"The generosity of this act is remarkable," said Wolk of the financing deal. She praised the county officials and Rumsey band as "true leaders." Endorsing such a blatant abuse of eminent domain power demonstrates Wolk's inability to fulfill her primary responsibility as an assemblywoman: to protect rights, not violate them. Considering Wolk's support for the Covell Village development last November, she will apparently support and protect property rights only if you conform to her vision for your property.

This case should be a wake-up call to students and Yolo County residents. The political leadership of this county has been hijacked by anti-growth, anti-property rights, and ultimately, anti-human extremists. In the process of establishing their utopia of statism in which the government confiscates or severely limits the use of property, they are annihilating individual rights.

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