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Better way to spend tax dollars

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I am responding to Supervisor Frank Sieferman Jr.'s recent guest opinion in which he laid out his 2006 goals as chairman of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. Among his goals is establishing a fiscally responsible county and using eminent domain to seize Conaway Ranch from its unwilling sellers.

Sieferman shares the majority view of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors (Supervisor Chamberlain excluded) that the Conaway Ranch is best protected under public rather than private ownership.

Taxpayers find this assumption difficult to swallow since the Yolo Grand Jury is investigating the county's housing agency for mismanagement, fraud and embezzlement. The federal government will also consider investigating the county for allowing gang members to live in federally funded housing - something strictly prohibited. If the county can't manage its existing agencies, how will our county government make a 17,000-acre ranch profitable under public ownership?

Sieferman claims that balancing the county budget is a priority. If past history is an indication of what is to come under Sieferman's leadership, taxpayers are well advised to hide their wallets. It was not long ago that the financially troubled Yolo County furloughed its public employees to save millions in payroll to balance its budget. Only later did taxpayers learn that the savings were squandered (and some) on high priced attorneys and public relations experts to seize the Conaway Ranch, and remodel offices for our county supervisors.

The Yolo County Board of Supervisors can't claim fiscal responsibility and concerns for Yolo farmland while squandering \$50 million to \$120 million or more of our tax dollars to seize a ranch that has been held in private ownership for more than 100 years. The county would better serve its taxpayers by fixing its beleaguered housing agency before getting into the business of farming.

If Supervisor Sieferman is concerned with his reelection this year, I encourage him to pen a new guest opinion titled - "Tax dollars intended to seize ranch better spent on public safety, education, flood protection and local roads."

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