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Santa Cruz County Fair,
14th District Agricultural Association
East Lake Ave.
Watsonville, CA 95076

Dear Board Members,

It has come to my attention that my gift of the Rodgers House, the Tank House and their foundations, installed by Jim Rector, of Cypress Construction in 1998, are the topic of recent discussion as to implementation of a policy that would govern operations, maintenance and further preservation of the home and tank house.

My original hope for the Rodgers House was (and still is) that it would bring our community together in some way, and *my intent of the gift of Rodgers House and the foundation it sits upon requires that its contents, current and future, are to be preserved with the house into perpetuity, regardless of what happens to the land that the Santa Cruz County Fair, 14th District Agricultural Association and the State of California own.*

At one point during negotiating the move to the Fairgrounds, I even spoke informally with your Fair Manager at the time, Dimitra Smith, about the possibility of restoring ownership of the house to me, as sort of "right of first refusal" should the land be sold to developers in the future. This notion was never formally presented or accepted by your then-Board of Directors, but I would like to be considered if the house were to be sold in the future; this, of course, would have to be a mutual decision between the state and myself, memorialized by some proclamation and recorded with the county recorder's office, I imagine.

Over a decade has passed since your Board accepted the house, and I could not be more pleased; as a matter of fact, I am deeply moved by the show of commitment by so many of the local folk. I have had many, many chances to see and hear, first hand, that people from all over appreciate and enjoy the Rodgers House and that it has "set the bar" for all Fairgrounds in our state as a showcase entrance, attraction and community center, especially with its complement, the Ag History Building.

At the time, I considered the house a jewel; today it shines brilliantly, and I thank you, Loretta Estrada, the Rodgers House Committee, the Fair Heritage Association, and of course, Jim and Marian Rector for that.

Please do not ever allow the Rodgers House to be separated from its rich history, which includes its very contents, much donated by Pajaro Valley citizens. Most importantly, it includes original artifacts once belonging to James and Malvina Rodgers and their descendants, brought to us by Edgar and Florence Dethlefsen; their generosity was an unimagined prospect at the time of my gift, but now a "dream come true."

Sincerely, and with gratitude

Melanie Kett Wirtanen