

**The Calaveras Enterprise, Friday, May 18, 2012**

## **The Enterprise Opinion**

### **LETTERS**

#### **Agenda 21 takes on pressing needs**

I find it hard to believe, as some assert, that the United Nations, through Agenda 21, its comprehensive plan of action for sustainability, seeks to undermine personal liberty and freedom in Calaveras County and that county government, non-profits, and community organizations are either knowing or unwitting participants in an Agenda 21 conspiracy for world dominance, in part, because they accept grant funds that promote sustainable development. It seems more credible that sustainability is simply an idea whose time has come to address a dwindling supply of finite natural resources and a growing world population.

Ideally, Agenda 21 seeks a global integration of environment and development concerns, because “greater attention to them will lead to the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future.” The premise of Agenda 21 is that “acceptance of the need to take a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development questions” will lead to a sustainable world. Agenda 21 would be “carried out by the various actors according to the different situations, capacities and priorities of countries and regions...”

As Agenda 21 warns, “We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being.” I understand why people are afraid, and why there is resentment toward a change in the way we manage our resources. However, our fear of a changing world should not turn to hysteria. Sustainability does not equal communism. It does emphasize unity in our quest for “a more perfect union.”

We share the earth, and our survival depends on a cooperative approach to planning our future, globally and locally. Agenda 21 attempts to define and address the challenges we face as a planet. It is an instructive, perhaps overly optimistic document with some good ideas, primarily sustainable development, which we can examine and adapt to our own landscape. Railing against Agenda 21 is kind of like killing the messenger.

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