

October 15, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today, Citizen's Alliance for Property Rights (CAPR) filed a legal action in San Juan Superior Court against the County of San Juan alleging both violations of Washington's Open Public Meetings Act and violations the Washington's Growth Management Act. All but one of the causes of action allege procedural and substantive errors in the County Council's deliberations during the County's revision of the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Shoreline Master Plan.

Simply, the goal of CAPR's legal action against the County of San Juan is to require the County Council to follow the laws pertaining to openness and transparency of government. This is essential in a functioning democracy.

The legal action alleges that members of the County Council have repeatedly met with staff behind closed doors and have not allowed the public to observe their deliberations. This is illegal. CAPR alleges that for more than a year, Council Members met as a CAO/SMP Implementation Committee and discussed important policy issues without allowing the public to observe the meetings as required by law. Similar behavior has also been evident in other county committees working on issues such as the county budget. CAPR has asked the Circuit Court to declare that these private meetings have been and are illegal, and to nullify any action that was taken therein.

In addition, CAPR alleges that the Council has failed to follow substantive laws, which provide how a county is to go about creating or revising a critical areas ordinance or shoreline master plan. CAPR alleges that the Council has failed to follow the Washington State Legislature's direction on what is to constitute "best available science".

While CAPR does not favor resorting to legal action, CAPR looks forward to the speedy and just resolution of this matter.

William H Wright

William Wright
President

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1) Form to all
2) Send to Gay Ross

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