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Palm Terrace

SEPT 88  
THE PAPER

9/22/88

# Environmentalists win bond ruling

BY JERRY WEIL

A Sebastopol environmental group will not have to post a cash bond in order to ban construction on the disputed Palm Terrace development as a result of a Wednesday afternoon ruling by Superior Court Judge Lawrence Sawyer.

"The ruling is an enormous relief," said Helen Libeu of Laguna Today and Tomorrow. "The other side was making noises of \$100,000," said Libeu. "A bond like that would have destroyed our case," she added.

A bond had been requested by attorneys for the Palm Terrace development group to protect their clients from financial loss due to the stay order blocking construction of the proposed 27-unit project. But Judge Sawyer ruled that the preservation of the environment outweighed any possible economic loss. The stay order will remain in effect, pending decision on the merits of the case.

Susan Brandt-Hawley, attorney for Laguna Today and Tomorrow, called Sawyer's ruling "encouraging" and was optimistic about the eventual outcome of the proceedings. Her clients are asking for a new EIR, charging that the city of Sebastopol was incorrect in approving the development on the basis of an EIR that is seven years old.

Brandt-Hawley guessed that a final ruling would be made in a month or so after Sawyer examines three extensive briefs submitted by her clients, the developers, and the city of Sebastopol.