

# Cities ask to audit sale of Tres Hermanos

By Marianne Napoles | Posted: Saturday, September 2, 2017 8:00 am

The cities of Chino Hills and Diamond Bar are asking the California Department of Finance to review the county-appointed oversight board's approval of the sale of Tres Hermanos to the City of Industry.

The oversight board, which is in charge of selling the ranch, voted 4-3 last Thursday to approve the sale of the 2,500 acres of land on both sides of Grand Avenue for \$41.65 million for a solar farm and open space.

Chino Hills city manager Rad Bartlam said there are a number of legal issues that should have been considered by the oversight board that were disregarded by the majority.

Mr. Bartlam said the board discounted the property value by 60 percent for no apparent reason other than to give Industry more money for its project.

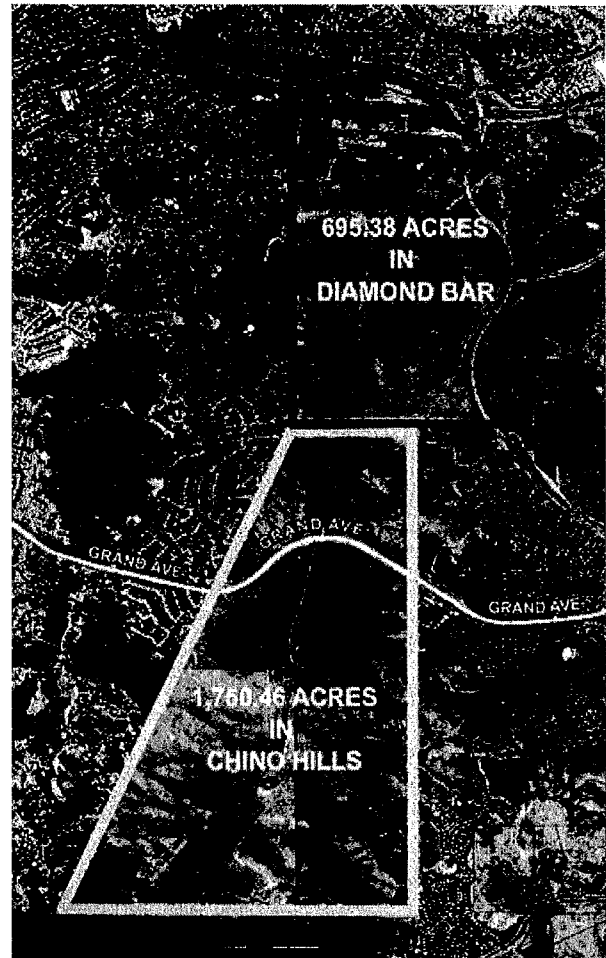
Diamond Bar city manager Dan Fox said he is concerned that the property was undervalued.

Industry previously offered \$100 million but it did not include a restrictive covenant preventing any other land use besides the renewable energy project and open space.

Industry's original offer was \$41.65 million based on an appraisal where the land was to be designated for open space only.

Mr. Fox said the solar farm is not consistent with Diamond Bar's general plan that allows for 624 housing units. The Chino Hills plan calls for a maximum of 467.

Diamond Bar's counsel, Woodruff, Spradlin & Smart, asked the California Department of Finance to disapprove the disposition of the property and audit the entire process, in an Aug. 28 letter.



Tres Hermanos

Graphic showing the 2,500-acre ranchland located in Chino Hills and Diamond Bar on both sides of Grand Avenue.

The counsel states in the letter that Industry has provided documents that reflect a 444 megawatt solar facility that would require the use of a substantial portion of the property, if not all.

Mr. Fox said 444 megawatts would take up a lot of area and that the flatter areas of Tres Hermanos closer to Grand Avenue would be the likely location.

The counsel also stated that Industry was supposed to submit its proposal to the planning commissions of Chino Hills and Diamond Bar before purchasing the property so that a finding could be made on whether it conformed with the general plan of those cities.

“The actions the cities of Diamond Bar and Chino Hills have taken since the decision last week gives us pause as to whether they oppose the City of Industry’s agreed-to covenant into perpetuity to keep Tres Hermanos as open space, recreation space, and for public purpose,” said a spokesperson for the City of Industry.

As for the proposal, “we are always happy to meet with anyone who has requested a meeting. At this time, there is no new information to share from last week’s hearing,” the spokesperson said.