



Tulare County Board Upholds Touchstone's Terra Bella Pistachio Plant Expansion Over Wonderful's Objections

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors today voted unanimously to deny an appeal by the Wonderful Company challenging permits that would allow expansion of the Terra Bella ARO pistachio processing facility. Stewart Resnick, the billionaire owner of the Wonderful Company, was attempting to leverage a rarely used appeal procedure to prevent the ARO plant from operating and becoming a competitive threat to his own massive operations.

The Board rejected Resnick's claims, noting that ARO's permit request mirrors similar permits issued in the past and that even the Wonderful Company itself has had the same permitting done.

Board Chairman Pete Vander Poel noted overwhelming support for the ARO plant in the farming community, adding, "I have received phone calls from competitors and growers. The sentiment was very consistent in supporting ARO."

Resnick and the Wonderful Company were originally attempting to stop the ARO expansion by claiming it needed a lengthy environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act. Yet, when Wonderful expanded their own pistachio processing facility in Kern County, they saw no need to comply with these same laws.

"This is a simple case. Mr. Resnick and the Wonderful Company want to eliminate competition so they can control the market and dictate prices," said Mark Sherrell, Chief of Plant Operations, Touchstone Pistachio Company.

"Without the balanced hand of the Board of Supervisors, the pistachio industry in this region would suffer a grave setback. We're grateful that the Board rejected Mr. Resnick's attempt to dictate how the county interprets its own ordinances. We look forward to completing the expanded processing facility," he concluded.

With the expansion of the ARO facility, the plant will employ nearly 130 full time workers and up to 240 during the peak processing period. The expanded plant will be able to process 50 million pounds of locally grown pistachios.