

This is Erin Dunn from the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

First I want to congratulate the business and individuals who were honored last week by the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce. Some of the winners include Business of the Year, CCrane Company; Citizen of the Year, Jeanne Dorris; Small Business of the Year, Clendenen's Cider Works; and New Business of the Year, Mad Metals.

I'm a little late weighing in on the goings-on at the Coastal Commission and the controversy surrounding the ousting of the Executive Director, but it's been on my mind.

What I've witnessed in the past 13 years since moving to Humboldt County, and working for a company that was the focus of lots of propaganda from extremists, is that sometimes staff becomes more powerful than the board. That the Executive Director of an organization like the Coastal Commission has an agenda and can often encourage the board to go along with it.

I don't know first-hand what happened at the Coastal Commission—I saw what happened after the firing. The extremists wanted you to believe it was developers behind the ouster. The board claimed that it was not the case.

One local politico, angered by the ouster, said in defense of the Executive Director: *Enforcing the Coastal Act is not an agenda. It is the responsibility of the Coastal Commission.* Shouldn't it be "Interpreting the Coastal Act is not an agenda. And it is the responsibility of the Coastal Commissioners, not the Executive Director." To me, that is more accurate.

About a week after the ouster, Assembly Member Wood announced that he would propose that lobbying of government bodies like the coastal commission needed to be transparent. That if you were going to try to

influence a group like the coastal commission, then you had to register as a lobbyist.

What do you think of first when you hear lobbyist? Developers? Paying for decisions?

Maybe.

But that description doesn't just fit developers. Some of the most influential lobbyists are the extreme so-called environmentalists with their own not-so-transparent agenda. They have had the biggest influence over the coastal commission in recent years. THEY will need to register as well.

Some people called the recent Coastal Commission move "political." It's only "political" when it doesn't go your way.

Someone on the board of Supervisors said the same thing recently about the Coastal Commission as they did when the make-up of the Board of Supervisors changed a few years ago. Both times this person said – *their work—prior to the change--had been policy oriented, and now, with the changes it, has become political.*

That's funny, because I thought just the opposite when the current Board of Supervisors came in. Finally it WASN'T political. And I feel the same way about the Coastal Commission—finally it's NOT political.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.