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June 13, 1933.

SUBJECT: Southern Drainage District.

Mr. J. W. Hoffman, Vice-Pres.  
Model Land Company,  
St. Augustine, Florida.

Dear Sir:

Referring further to your letter of June 7th in connection with the annual meeting of the Landowners of the Southern Drainage District.

The writer attended the annual meeting of the Landowners of the Southern Drainage District, which convened in the office of the District, at 2:00 P. M. on yesterday, Monday, June 12th, the following being present:

F. H. Siegel, Pres. of Board of Supervisors,  
J. P. Conrad, Supervisor-Treasurer,  
Dr. J. L. Holmberg, Pres. of Landowners League,  
J. T. Rambler,  
Dan L. Killiam,  
M. J. Sloan,  
W. A. H. Hobbs,  
M. G. Jessee.

Dr. Holmberg was elected by those present, to act as Chairman of the meeting, and J. T. Rambler, as Temporary Secretary.

Your acreage was voted for Mr. Siegel who was unanimously re-elected as a Member of the Board of Supervisors.

In accordance with your request, the writer moved the adoption of a resolution by the landowners, requesting the Supervisors to go on record as being in favor of omitting the levy of drainage taxes in this District, for an indefinite period, with the idea in mind that in all probability there will be a special session of the Legislature in the Fall, and if such a resolution was adopted at this time, the Supervisors would then be in a position to have a Bill presented for passage in the Legislature to have their

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action confirmed and the omission of future levies authorized. This motion failed to reach a vote, however, for the want of a second, but the motion brought forth considerable discussion on the subject, which finally resulted in the passage of a resolution requesting the Supervisors to omit the setting of any tax rate for the year 1934, Supervisor Conrad explaining that the Supervisors did not make the levy, but that was done by the Legislature, the only duty of the Supervisors in this connection, being the setting of the tax rate, and that the Supervisors could simply fail to set the tax rate, and this omission would have the effect of eliminating the tax for that year, and the Supervisors agreed to comply with this resolution, in view of the outcome of the 1932 drainage tax collections which amounted to \$5300.00, the most of which was absorbed in the form of fees and costs going to the Tax Collector and other taxing officials, which resulted in the tax officials being the only parties to derive any benefit from the Drainage tax.

The writer thought it advisable, before this meeting, to confer with Supervisor Siegel and Dr. Holmberg, President of the Landowners League, in an effort to enlist their support of the resolution which we proposed to offer to bring about the indefinite suspension of assessments, and so conferred with them with this in view, and while Mr. Siegel indicated that he thought they should take some action looking to the elimination of the 1934 assessment, he did not appear inclined to commit himself definitely as being in favor of the indefinite suspension of assessments. Dr. Holmberg also failed to react favorably to this suggestion, stating he thought it would probably be beneficial to some of the landowners to have some work done on the Snapper Creek Canal, but that he thought they would probably make some arrangements to omit the 1934 assessment.

During the discussion of the motion which we offered to bring about the indefinite suspension of drainage tax levies, Supervisor Conrad took the position that he thought it unwise to suspend levies for an indefinite period, as that would effect a virtual abandonment of the District, and made the inquiry as to whom the landowners might look to to take care of the outstanding business of the District, such as maintaining the office and taking care of requests for redemption of past Southern Drainage tax certificates, etc., stating that if assessments were indefinitely suspended, the landowners organization would disband and with the District abandoned, some other body or Drainage Board would probably assume control to the disadvantage of the landowners, and if these lands were taken into some other Drainage District or put under the control of some other State Board, then the landowners would lose what control they now had over their lands and possibly be subject to unreasonable assessments. Supervisor Conrad also stated that he would not be able to carry on this work of the District without any compensation, as he had done during the past year and a half. Both Mr. Siegel and Dr. Holmberg

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were inclined to concur in Mr. Conrad's opinion that it would be better to retain control of the situation thru the present District organization than to abandon or dissolve the District with the possibility that some other Drainage Board or governing body might assume control, to the detriment of the landowners.

By way of explanation of the vote, or rather the lack of support of our resolution, I might state for your information, that Mr. Rambler is the Dredging Contractor who does most of the reclamation and maintenance work of the District, and is the owner of numerous Southern Drainage tax certificates (possibly assigned to him by the District in payment for some of his work), it is obvious that he is vitally interested in the continued operation of the District, and, therefore, could not be expected to support any move which would be against his own personal interest.

And further, in this connection, since Messrs. Killian, Sloan and Hobbs were all three present, representing themselves and other landowners in the vicinity of the Snapper Creek Canal, to request that the District do certain work for the benefit of these landowners, and also in view of the fact that both Mr. Sloan and Mr. Hobbs expressed themselves as being willing to take on the work of constructing the desired improvements for the District, their interest in the continued operation of the District and the maintenance of yearly assessments to provide funds for such work as they proposed, is obvious.

It, therefore, seems that your representative was the only one present at this meeting who was not interested in some measure in maintaining the yearly assessments of drainage taxes, and while it is to be regretted that we were unable to accomplish the results which you desired, under the line-up as explained above, yet, we feel that the results are the best that could be hoped for under the circumstances. The writer is of the opinion, however, that had there been a goodly attendance of landowners instead of only the "handful" present as enumerated in this letter, that we would have experienced no difficulty in securing the passage of our resolution for the indefinite suspension of levies in this District.

Mr. Killian presented to the District Officials, a request on behalf of Mr. Rice, owner of the old Flagler Grove, and other landowners, including himself, in the vicinity of the Snapper Creek Canal, for the construction of a lock in that Canal for the purpose of raising the water table to provide sufficient moisture to maintain their groves and enable the farmers in this vicinity to produce their crops, Mr. Killian stating that these lands are now so dry that Mr. Rice is spending thousands of dollars pumping water to keep his grove in production, and the farmers owning lands in that vicinity are being

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ruined because of overdrainage, their lands having become so dry and arid that it is impossible to produce a crop on them during the usual dry seasons, and although they admit that if the requested improvements are made, they may be flooded during any unusually heavy rainfalls, occasionally, yet, they prefer this condition rather than have their lands dried out for the greater part of the year, to the extent that they cannot produce their crops, and maintain their groves because of lack of moisture. Mr. Killian expressed the belief that the lock which they desired could be installed for possibly \$500.00 or \$600.00, or perhaps less. He was advised, however, by Mr. Conrad and Mr. Siegel, Supervisors, that the District had no funds with which to do this work at the present time. In this connection, Mr. Conrad suggested to Mr. Killian that he circulate a petition among the landowners desiring this work done in order to determine just how great the demand was for this improvement and further suggested that Mr. Killian might be able to work out some kind of an arrangement with Mr. Marcus Milan, Chairman of the State Drainage Board, whereby Mr. Milan's Board could give them some assistance in bringing about this improvement, and that also, Mr. Milan's Board might be able to assist them in securing some financial aid from the unemployment fund being dispensed by the Federal Government. In this connection, Mr. Hobbs made a motion that the landowners assembled at this meeting go on record as requesting the board of Supervisors to assist them in getting this work done, and that Chairman Holmberg appoint a committee of three to circulate petitions and get together a delegation to call upon Mr. Milan to see if his Board cannot render some assistance and help them to secure some of the Government funds for this purpose, which motion was carried, and Chairman Holmberg appointed a committee composed of Dan L. Killian, M. J. Sloan and W. A. H. Hobbs, for this purpose.

While the writer has gone rather into minute detail in reporting to you the result of this meeting, yet, we know that you are interested in the activities of this District, for which reason we believe you would appreciate a full and complete report of what transpired, and for the further reason that by giving you such a report, we believe you will be able to judge for yourself the reason for our failure to accomplish the adoption of our resolution providing for the indefinite suspension of levies of drainage taxes in this District.

We trust our handling of this matter will meet with your approval.

Yours very truly,

MCG/J

PEPPER AND COFFRIN, INC.

Cy Messrs. Pepper & Coffrin:  
Blowing Rock, N. C.  
for their information.