

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Jesseka Rodriguez](#)
Subject: FW: Renew 4Leaf contract
Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024 10:59:56 AM

From: Ray Newkirk [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, December 15, 2024 1:53 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountycalifornia.gov>
Subject: Renew 4Leaf contract

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Dear sirs,

Ray Newkirk here, general contractor [REDACTED]. Outside Enterprises, Inc. DBA: Outside The Box Builders & Santa Cruz Resilient Homes.

I have been a builder in this county most of my life. I got my license in 1996 because I never liked the way the contractors I worked for until then did business. And they liked to complain about inspectors.

I am about to do the exact opposite. I've never had a problem with an inspector. Sure there have been a couple times I missed something, but it was always small enough that it was fixed before the inspector left & I always got his or her signature.

What happened to all the people who lost their homes in the CZU fire has been tempered somewhat by the County's wise decision to hire 4Leaf to process plans & do inspections. Now you are about to terminate their contract. I feel this is a big mistake.

I am about to finish my 3rd fire rebuild using ICF (insulated concrete forms) blocks that are extremely earthquake & fire resistant. Though my name hasn't been on a lot of permits as I've helped many owner/builders and been a sub for numerous other generals, I have dealt with the building department and inspectors many times. In fact, I was the only contractor to participate in the City of Santa Cruz's Green Building Working Group. So I've seen a bit of how things are done here.

4Leaf, Inc. has been a joy to work with. They are very informed, responsive, helpful, pleasant, & get things done! Maddy and Jasmine are very friendly on the phone & always do what they say quickly & accurately. No fuss, no muss, so to speak.

The first fire rebuild I did was up China Grade. It was a Faswall house designed by the homeowner & spec'd by Faswall's engineer. There were several revisions made due to owner afterthoughts, after the permit was issued. We always had our answers &

approval from 4Leaf within a couple days, at no additional cost, so we could continue moving forward. All I can compare this to is how many stories I've heard over the years about delays & extra expenses from County Building & Planning. Including one I experienced myself when we were held hostage for \$4000 no one told us about to get our Certificate of Occupancy for a paved driveway. Which was required by the County! But I digress... Another reason I don't want 4Leaf to leave is because of their inspectors. Lincoln, their former inspector, was great and hard-nosed & informed, which is always a plus for a successful build.

Mark Hillabran, their current inspector is all that and more. Excuse my French, but he knows his shit! He used to build with CMU (concrete masonry unit) blocks himself. And he knows a lot about every other aspect of a building from plumbing & electric to shower pans to roof framing. He has been very helpful in many ways and I think it will be a great loss to the County, it's contractors and all the poor landowners who are still trying to put their lives back together after the fire.

As you know, this county is damn hard to survive in, let alone build or rebuild in. The second Faswall home I built has been left uncompleted for close to a year now because the owner didn't have as much money as she thought. And there are about 10 other houses in the same area that have been in the same state of non-completion since before we started building there.

I'm sure this will only get worse if we don't have the knowledge & professionalism of 4Leaf to rely on in the future.

I urge you to renew your contract with 4Leaf, Inc. to continue alleviating an already daunting process of rebuilding. Or at least give them all a raise & jobs with the County! They show us how it's done!

Sincerely,

Ray Newkirk

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Ray Newkirk.