

“X” MARKS THE SPOT: DRAFTING CLEAR PLANNING DOCUMENTS

September 12, 2018

Florida APA Conference



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PRESENTERS



Brian Seymour: Shareholder and Co-Chair of the Real Property Practice at Gunster, working out of Gunster's West Palm Beach office. After completing his BA in Social Science at San Francisco State University, Brian went on to receive his J.D. from Fordham University School of Law. He began his career as an eminent domain litigation lawyer and took that knowledge to the practice in all areas of land use and development, working on projects and litigation throughout Florida. Brian is also a former Military Police officer in the U.S. Army. So, he knows that commas can kill.



Marty Minor: Senior Project Planner with Urban Design Kilday Studios in West Palm Beach. After completing his BS in Journalism at Ohio University, Marty was a newspaper reporter working in Washington, D.C., Israel, Ohio and Florida. Marty ultimately went on to obtain a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida Atlantic University and holds an AICP designation. Combining his love of writing and planning, Marty is a master at telling project stories as well as drafting code, design guidelines, and comprehensive plans and amendments.



WHY DO YOU CARE?

Like it or not...

People will make judgments about how you write.



(It might not be fair, but it's reality.)



OVERVIEW

- ▶ Grammar Matters
- ▶ Telling The Story/Making The Argument
- ▶ Code Drafting
- ▶ Emails and Social Media



GRAMMAR MATTERS

Every time you use an
apostrophe to make
a word plural, a
puppy dies.



som^{ee}cards
user card

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HOMOPHONES

You're	You are.
Your	It belongs to you.
They're	They are.
Their	It belongs to them.
There	A place.
We're	We are.
Were	Past tense of are.
Where	A place.
Then	A point in time.
Than	A method of comparison.
Two	The number 2.
To	Indicates motion.
Too	Also or Excessively.



SIGHT, SITE OR CITE

- ▶ Sight: To see, as with your eyes
- ▶ Site: A location
- ▶ Cite: A reference

- The plan includes safe cite triangles.
- The plan includes safe site triangles.
- The plan includes safe sight triangles



AFFECT OR EFFECT

- ▶ Affect: To influence
 - ▶ Effect: The result or impact
-
- The development will affect traffic on the existing roadway network.
 - One effect of the new development is increased traffic on the roadway network.

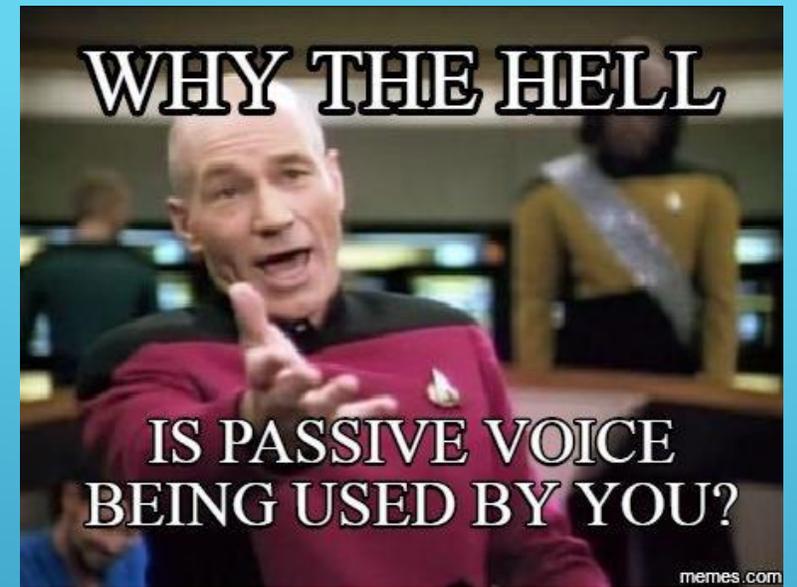


PASSIVE VOICE



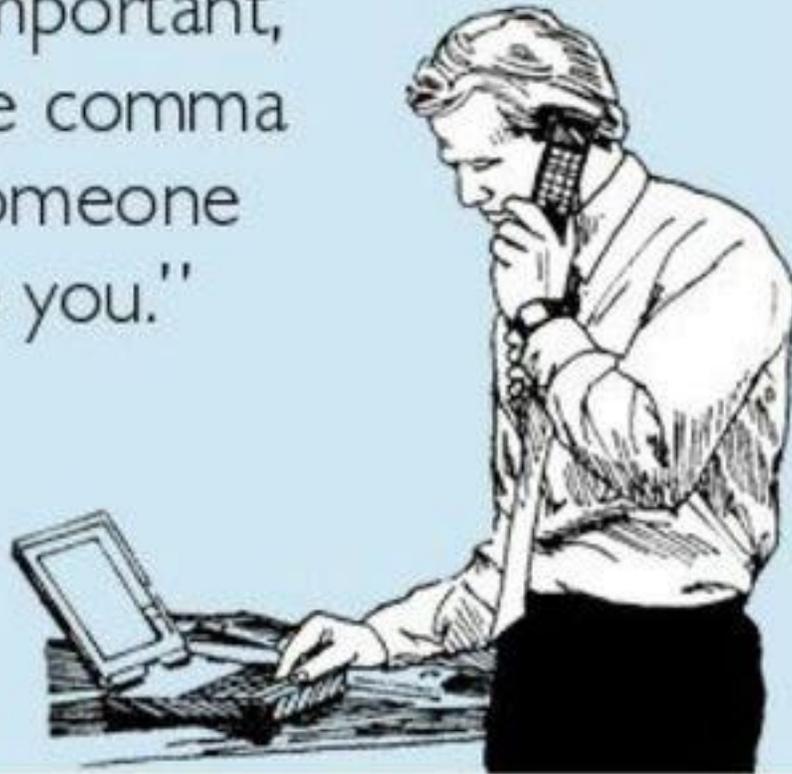
PASSIVE VOICE

- ▶ “Traffic will be effected.”
- ▶ “The new development will include significant mobility improvements that will have the effect of decreasing its traffic impacts and enhancing current traffic flow.”



PUNCTUATION

If you don't think
punctuation is important,
try forgetting the comma
when you tell someone
"I'm sorry, I love you."



somee cards
user card

Written by Jamie Capria

I'M NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD.COM

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PUNCTUATION



“Let’s eat, Mom!”



“Let’s eat Mom!”

Save a life. Use a comma.



RULES FOR COMMA USAGE

- ▶ Before a conjunction – and, but, for, however, etc. – linking two independent clauses
- ▶ After a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence
- ▶ Adding information in a sentence
- ▶ After introductory adverbs
- ▶ Before a quote
- ▶ Between adjectives modifying the same noun
- ▶ Prepositional phrases



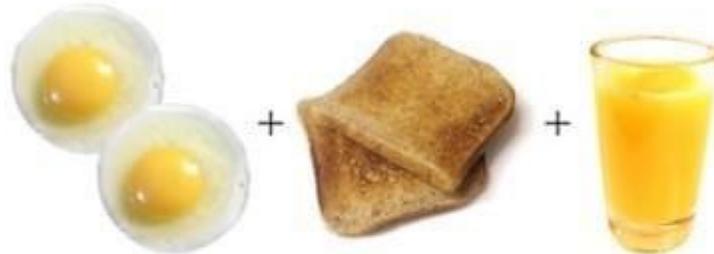
THE OXFORD COMMA

WHY I STILL USE THE OXFORD COMMA

shoriee.tumblr.com

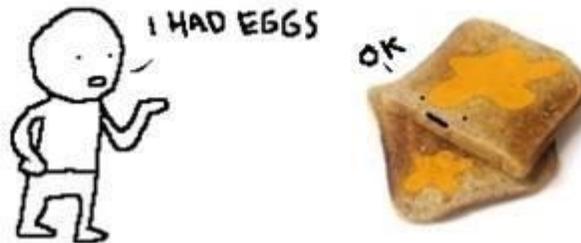
WITH:

I had eggs, toast, and orange juice.



WITHOUT:

I had eggs, toast and orange juice.



SEMICOLONS AND COLONS

- ▶ Semicolon (;): Connect two independent clauses; Separate three or more items in a series; and separate two independent clauses joined by a transition word or phrase
- ▶ Colon (:): Connect independent clauses that include a list
 - The development positively impacts traffic; the mobility improvements will help create safer and more fluid traffic flow.
 - The development adds value in various ways: provides mobility improvements, creates a tax base, enhances landscaping and open space, and provides for a public park.



SEMICOLONS AND COLONS

“A woman, without her man, is nothing.”

“A woman: without her, man is nothing.”

Punctuation is powerful.



 Grammarly Cards

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MAKING THE ARGUMENT/TELLING THE STORY

ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY

WIN AN ARGUMENT ON THE INTERNET



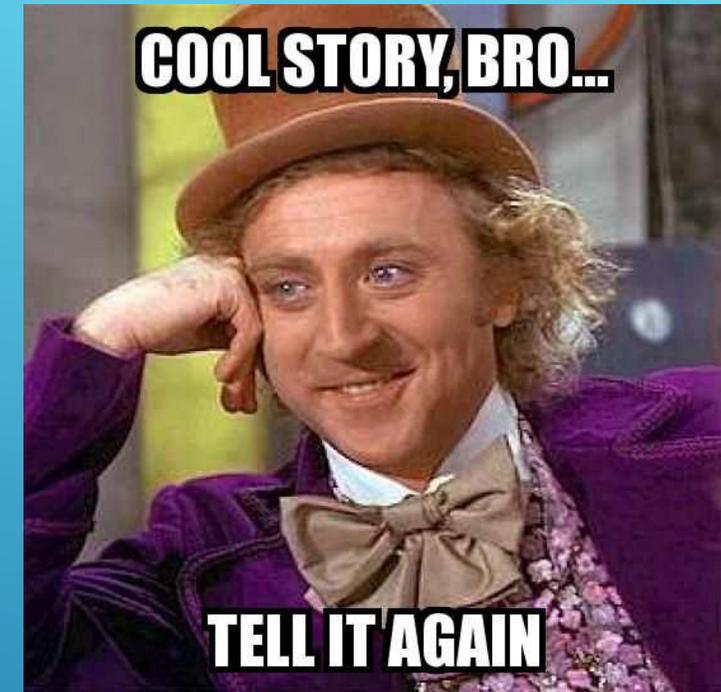
MAKING THE ARGUMENT/TELLING THE STORY

- ▶ Everyone loves a story
- ▶ Who is your audience
- ▶ The 5 Ws and 1 H
- ▶ Structuring Your Narrative
- ▶ Complete, Simple and Clear
- ▶ No Tall Tales – Avoid Hyperbole
- ▶ Second Set of Eyes



EVERYONE LOVES A STORY

- ▶ Every document is a chance to tell a story.
- ▶ A narrative helps maintain audience engagement and understanding.
- ▶ Go Big or Go Small!
- ▶ Don't forget that all stories all have a beginning, middle and end.



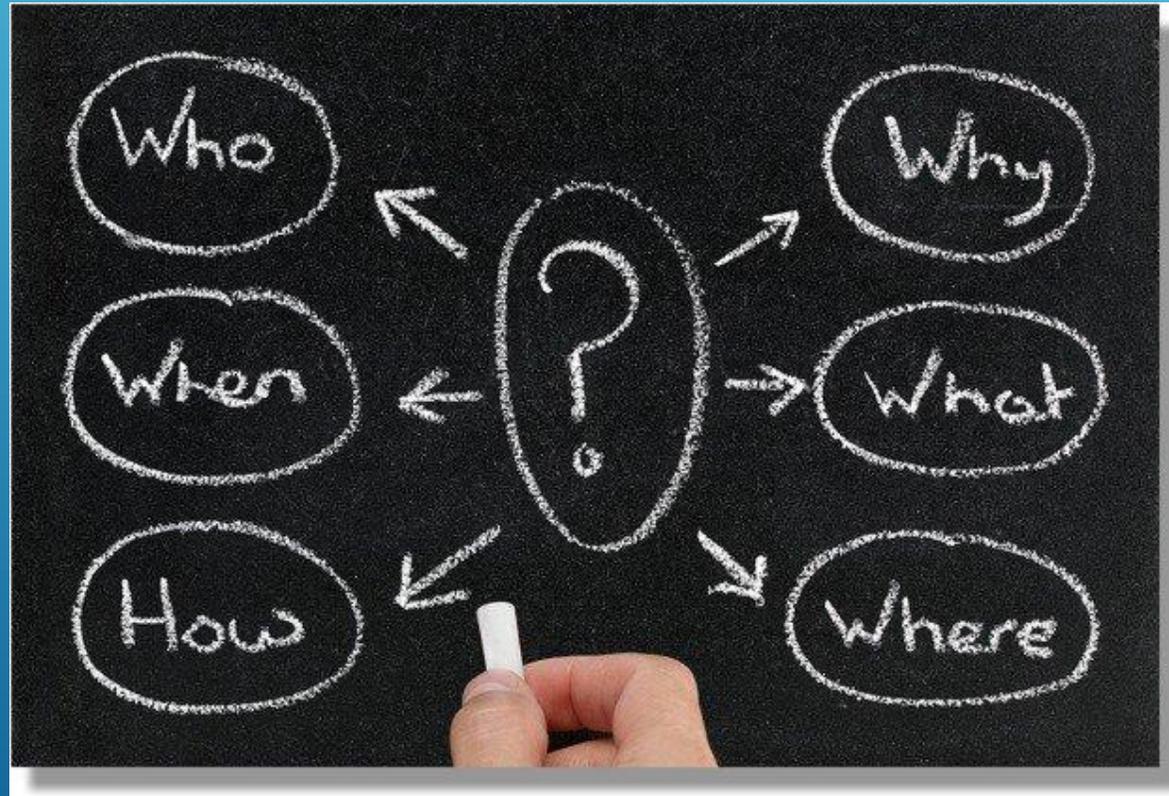
WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

- ▶ Typically, you will have 3 audiences:
 - ▶ Your Boss.
 - ▶ Decision-Makers.
 - ▶ The Public.
- ▶ Your audience will determine what type of document you will produce.
- ▶ Anticipate what information your audience wants/needs.



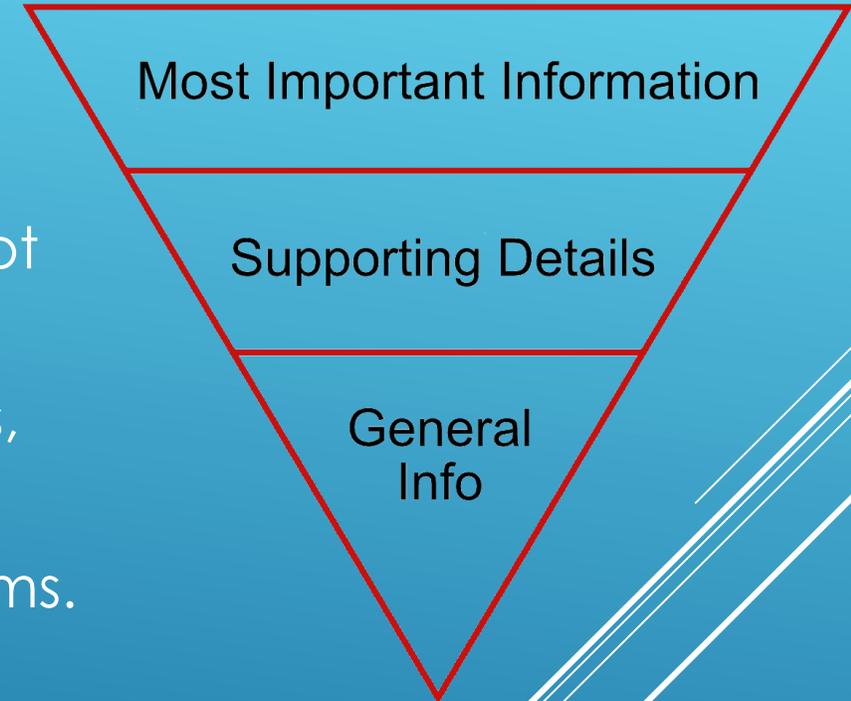
THE 5 W'S AND 1 H

- ▶ Essential Information that should be provided in each document.
- ▶ Who?
- ▶ What?
- ▶ When?
- ▶ Why?
- ▶ Where?
- ▶ How?



STRUCTURING YOUR NARRATIVE

- ▶ Inverted Pyramid.
 - ▶ Include the 5 Ws and 1 H first in your document.
 - ▶ Important information first as some readers will not reach the end of the report/document.
 - ▶ Supporting Details provide background, statistics, context, and analysis.
 - ▶ General Info contains interesting and related items.



STRUCTURING YOUR NARRATIVE

▶ Structuring Sentences and Paragraphs

▶ Use the Active Voice:

- ▶ “There were a great number of dead trees lying on the ground.”
- ▶ “Dead trees covered the ground.”

▶ Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.

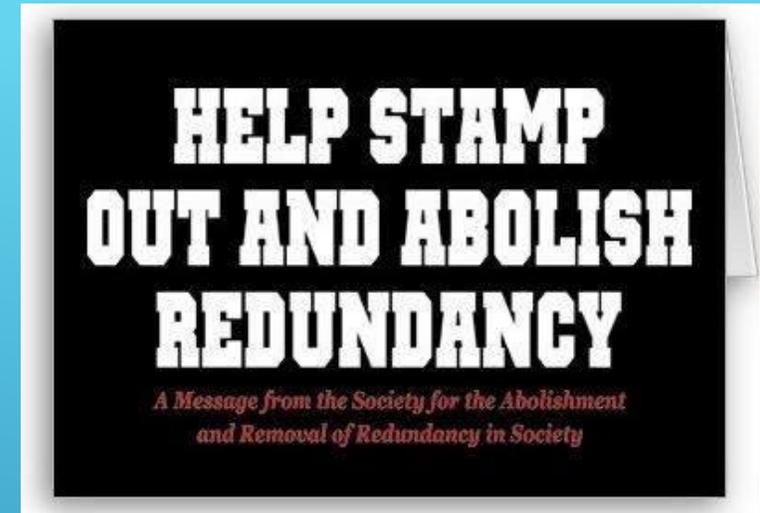
- ▶ “Bald Cypress is principally used for littoral zones, because of its hardiness in wet conditions.”
- ▶ “Because of its hardiness to wet conditions, Bald Cypress is principally used in littoral zones.”

▶ Make paragraphs reflect a completed thought or topic.



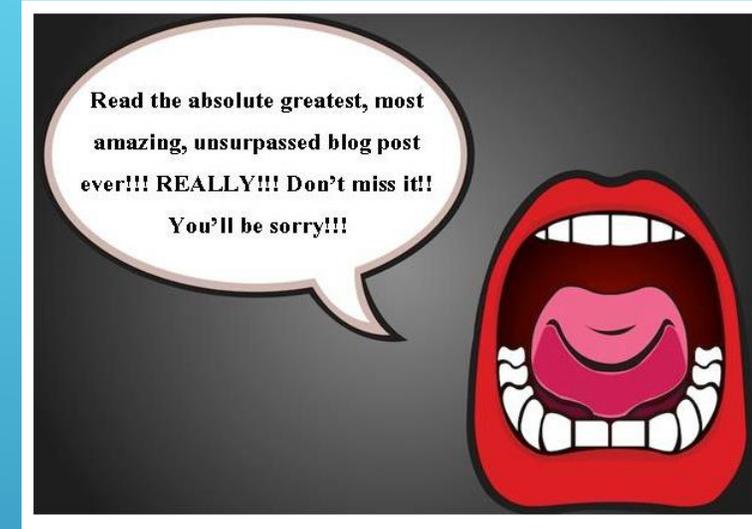
COMPLETE, SIMPLE AND CLEAR

- ▶ Communication can not be accomplished without simple, complete and clear sentences.
- ▶ Be direct and honest; don't dance around an issue.
- ▶ Make sure the reader knows who is speaking.
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary words.
- ▶ Break up long sentences into smaller sentences.
- ▶ Don't be afraid of lists or bullet points.
- ▶ Be understandable to future readers.



NO TALL TALES – AVOID HYPERBOLE

- ▶ Rich, ornate language is hard to digest.
- ▶ Avoid Hyperboles
 - ▶ Don't say “landscaping has been greatly enhanced” when only 2 trees have been added on 50 acres.
- ▶ Suppress Superlatives and Buzzwords
- ▶ Cite Sources



SECOND SET OF EYES

- ▶ Write, Review and Rewrite
- ▶ Have someone else review your writing.
- ▶ Put some distance from your text.
- ▶ Edit and proofread in several short blocks of time.
- ▶ Find a quiet place to work.



RULES FOR CODE DRAFTING

- ▶ Simple
- ▶ Clear
- ▶ Avoid Vagueness



VAGUENESS

- ▶ “Language that fails to give adequate guidance to those who are to follow it, to guide those who would potentially violate it, or to guide courts in applying it, is unconstitutionally vague”
- ▶ Would a person (not a planner or developer) of ordinary intelligence understand it?
- ▶ Does it fairly provide notice of what can or cannot be done?
- ▶ Could it be arbitrarily or discriminatorily applied?

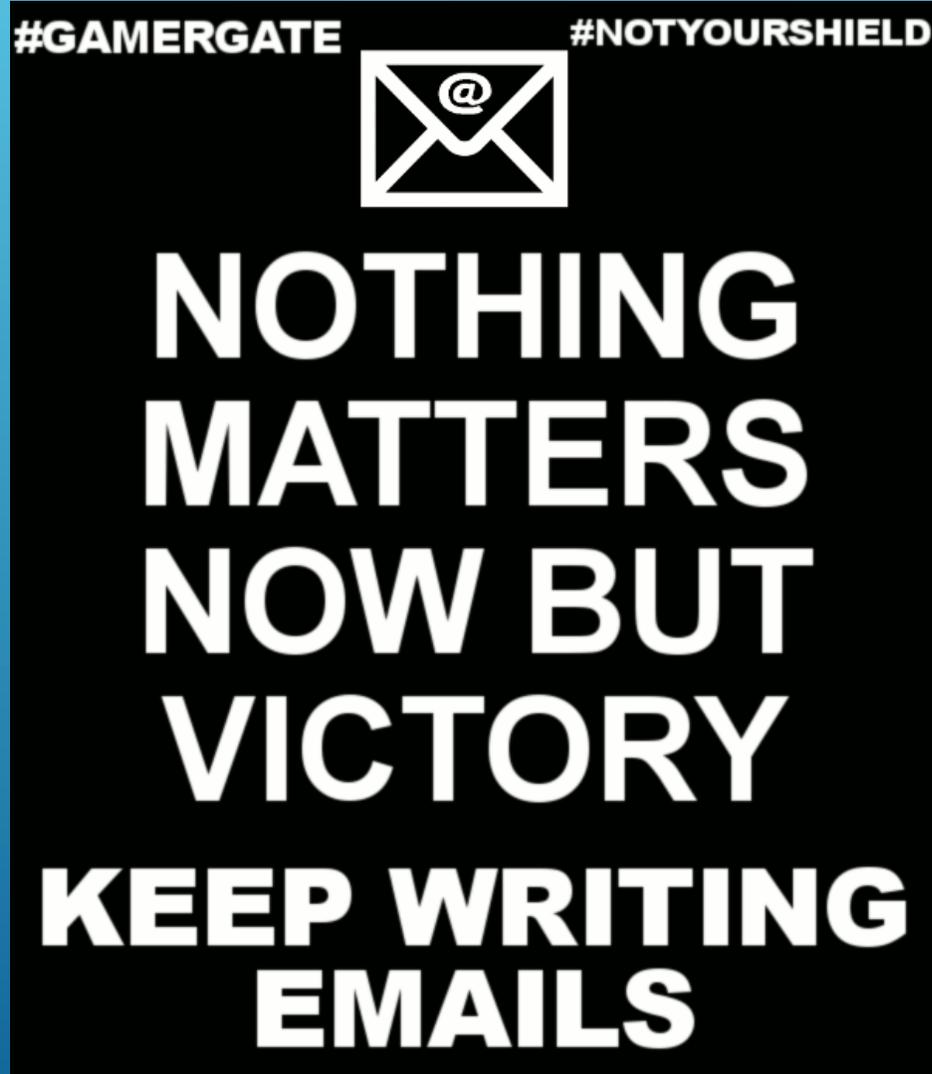


THE OXFORD COMMAND & \$5,000,000

- ▶ “... canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution”
- ▶ “... canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment, or distribution”



EMAILS AND SOCIAL MEDIA



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