

McClenagan, Laura

Subject: FW: STR Ordinance proposal

From: Chip Tittmann <chip.tittmann@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 12:34 PM

To: Hilton, Keenan <KHilton@co.humboldt.ca.us>; PlanningBuilding <planningbuilding@co.humboldt.ca.us>

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Keenan and John,

Thank you for allowing the public to comment of the Short Term Rental (STR) ordinance you are proposing. The current Ordinance proposal is certainly better than originally proposed. But a “Two Tiered Approach” has not been addressed: one for urban areas one for rural and coastal areas.

The information below, about Santa Barbara has just come to our attention. I hope it will be convincing to you not to impose the proposed restrictions on rural STRs in Humboldt County. You have already agreed that Shelton Cove STRs have special considerations relative to the STR ordinance. As the Coastal Commission has insisted Santa Barbara comply for public access to the coast, please consider the argument that access to State Parks, BLM sites, the Avenue of the Giants and other rural parts of Humboldt County should be encouraged, not restricted as the current ordinance proposal is doing.

Why not allow the existing rural STR operators to continue as “unregulated”, as the Coastal Commission has insisted of Santa Barbara? The Coastal Commission legal precedent could open up the County for law suits to protect existing STR’s not only in the Humboldt coastal areas, but also in rural Humboldt. One size does not fit all. As you have heard in every public meeting, this is a life line for small, rural STR operators, an economic engine for tourism and a gateway beyond the cannabis economy.

Please, make the rural permit process be simple, without building codes or road restrictions:

*Collect the bed tax, yes.

*Require a business license, yes.

*Have operators sign noise, light and parking agreements, yes.

*The Good Neighbor Agreement for immediate neighbors within 500 ft is sensible, yes.

Let the rural STR market regulate itself. If egregious operators or problems arise, through Code Enforcement, you will still have the control to shut them down if there are credible and substantive complaints.

There are rumblings that the existing STR operators are mounting a significant lawyer money chest to oppose the ordinance if it is not less restrictive than even this newest iteration of the Ordinance. These law suits would cost the County to defend the ordinance. They would delay implementation of any ordinance and not achieve your desires of urban neighborhood stability and maintaining housing stocks in critical areas. In your very first Zoom meeting, a “Lawyer from Trinidad” suggested this two tiered approach: permits for urban neighborhoods and “unregulated” for rural. Another presenter at the Garberville public meeting also suggested that all of Southern Humboldt is a “recreation zone similar to Sheltor Cove” and should have less restrictive permit regulations to allow for greater tourism, an economic rebound and continued STR operator livelihoods.

It is our understanding, in Santa Barbara, STRs aren’t allowed in most inland areas of the city because, by their County ordinance, they’re mostly prohibited.

However, short-term rentals in the coastal area are allowed, following a [2021 California appeals court ruling](#) overturning a 2015 law banning most STRs from coastal areas of the city.

According to the California Coastal Commission, Santa Barbara’s previous ban violated the California Coastal Act, which requires affordable accommodations to be available to the public in the coastal zone. The Coastal Commission has [become more involved in local regulation of vacation rentals](#) in recent years, often supporting short-term rentals as essential to public access.

Regulation of short-term vacation rentals in the coastal zone was limited by a court judgement by California Appeals Court Judge Steven Perren in a 2021 ruling. As such, Santa Barbara now limits STR’s in their inland zones, but STRs in the Coastal zone remain “unregulated”.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions. I look forward to a robust conversation tonight with the Planning Commission tonight and hope you will consider a “two tiered approach” to the ordinance...ct

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