



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 11/6/2025

File #: 25-1319

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Departmental Report

SUBJECT:

Information Update on the County's Short-Term Rental Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Receive the report.

DISCUSSION:

The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department officially began accepting applications for short-term rentals on April 4, 2024. This important step marked the beginning of a new opportunity for property owners interested in entering the short-term rental market and for existing short-term rentals that were not able to obtain the necessary permits. After an evaluation period, the department began issuing permits to successful applicants beginning on July 3, 2024. The permitting process has been limited specifically to properties situated within the inland regions of Humboldt County.

Between April 4, 2024, and September 30, 2025, the Planning and Building Department reported the following statistics regarding short-term rental applications:

- 1. Total Applications Received: 270** - This figure illustrates interest among property owners eager to participate in the short-term rental process.
- 2. Approved Applications: 184-** A total of 184 applications have been approved to operate as short-term rentals, meeting the necessary standards. Out of these, 24 were specifically for Farm Stay Housing.
- 3. Applications Pending: 37** - Currently, 37 applications remain under review. These applications are undergoing thorough assessments to ensure compliance with local regulations and standards before

they can be approved.

4. Special Permits Required: 7 - Among the applications, 7 require special permits due to zoning regulations.

5. Issues with Applications: 42 - This category encountered various challenges, such as duplicate submissions, errors during the application process, or properties situated within city limits or designated commercial or coastal zones.

These statistics provide an overview of the short-term rental permitting process in Humboldt County, highlighting the growing interest and engagement of local property owners. Furthermore, the California Coastal Commission approved the coastal portion of Humboldt County's short-term rental ordinance on September 24, 2025, allowing for short-term rentals along the coast regions. This recent development will likely enhance lodging options for visitors exploring the beauty of Humboldt County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The department received revenue of \$32,900 from processing seven special permit applications. Each special permit requires an average of 12 hours of staff time for thorough review and approval. The revenue collected from these permits effectively offsets the operational costs associated with their processing, ensuring the department can maintain its functions without incurring any financial deficits.

The revenue generated from processing 184 short-term rental permit applications totals \$26,680. Each application requires approximately 1.5 hours of staff time to process. The cost to process each application is \$285, while the fee charged for a short-term rental permit is only \$145. This results in a significant shortfall: specifically, the department incurs a loss of \$140 for each application processed. When this loss is multiplied across all 184 applications, the department faces a total deficit of \$25,760.

In 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved an increase in the permit fee from \$145 to \$190. However, this adjustment still did not cover the full cost of processing the permits. To address this ongoing issue and fully account for the necessary staff time, amounting to 1.5 hours for processing each application, the department will raise the fee from \$190 to \$285. This increase will ensure that the actual processing costs are fully covered, thereby safeguarding the department's financial responsibility moving forward.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

State of California Coastal Commission

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

NA

ATTACHMENTS:

1. NA