

June 12, 2021

To: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

From: Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship

Re: County Target Shooting Ordinance Revisited

In light of the County Board of Supervisors' recent decision to re-examine the target shooting sections of Chapter 5.5 of the County Code, the Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship (HIF) is resending below the document we submitted on the topic last year.

Between fall 2019 and early spring 2020, the HIF held a series of meetings on target shooting concerns with community members, including Sheriff Honsal. We also did some research of our own.

It is our hope that resubmitting the below statement will be of help to the supervisors in this important task.

With Gratitude,

Rev. Molly Cate

Secretary for the Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship

Feb. 27, 2020

To: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

From: Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship

Re: County Target Shooting Ordinance

The Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship applauds the Board of Supervisors for re-examining Title IX Chapter 5.5 of the County Code as it applies to target shooting. We have held several meetings on this topic, including a candid and very helpful Q&A session with Sheriff Bill Honsal. We support the expansion of ordinance 915.5 to include a ban on shooting within 150 yards of any occupied structure and rigorous requirements for gun safety training.

As an interfaith group representing a wide array of faith traditions, our concern is the dignity and safety of life. While we acknowledge the rights of target shooters, we also recognize the sanctity of all life: human, livestock, pets and wildlife. We find the current ordinance, 915.5, inadequate in several ways and believe that complete descriptions of public safety standards, whether addressed in other laws or not, should be included in this ordinance to assist responsible target shooters in educating themselves.

As the Board of Supervisors prepares to re-examine the effectiveness of this ordinance, we ask you to consider the following topics we believe should be clearly delineated in 915.5:

- The language of section 915.5-7 "Restricted Target Shooting" seems dangerously unclear. It states that (unclear language in **bold**), "No person shall discharge any firearm for the purpose of target shooting **on, into or over any public place...unless the safe shooting standards, listed below**

are met. This wording can be read to mean any target shooter can discharge any firearm for the purpose of target shooting on, into or over any public place...if the safe shooting standards are met. Only one safe standard is mentioned, in the next section, 915.5-8, making the use of the plural "standards" incorrect and it only discusses the height of a backstop. No mention is made of public places that are unsafe for any shooting on, into or over. This raises the disturbing image of hiking trails, for example, being shot into or across.

- A fuller description of the dimensions of any backstop is needed. Currently, only a height of 20 feet is mentioned. What about width and safe materials?
- A ban on Tannerite and especially its imitators, some of which pose a significant fire hazard.
- Sound level restrictions by decibel level. These can be easily checked through smartphone apps.
- Lead recovery requirements. Lead is highly toxic and is killing wildlife.
- Increasing the distances from highways (915.5-6) to include all public roads and a minimum limit of one mile. Bullets can routinely travel much farther than a half mile.
- Inclusion of non-firearm, projectile weapons such as hunting bows and crossbows.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

Members of the Humboldt Interfaith Fellowship:

Rev. Molly Cate, Unity of the Redwoods

The Rev. Anne Pierson, Christ Episcopal Church

Scott Sattler, MD (Universal Sufism)

Rabbi Naomi Steinberg, Temple Beth El

The Rev. Dr. Daniel London, Christ Episcopal Church

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Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson, Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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