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Subject: FW: Transient Habitation-Low Intensity Camping
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From: Maryellen Sheppard <sheppard@mcn.org>
Sent: Monday, July 29, 2024 11:03 AM
To: [pbscommissions](mailto:pbscommissions@mendocinocounty.gov) <pbscommissions@mendocinocounty.gov>
Subject: Transient Habitation-Low Intensity Camping

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Good Day, I am writing in regard to proposed changes to the Mendocino County General Plan. I am stunned at the proposal to allow Transient Habitation—Low Intensity Camping on nearly every residentially zoned property in the county. While the proposal limits the number of campsites for RV, trailers and/or tents to 10, this plan would result in ~30 campers per day on an approved parcel. Based on a quick read of the planning material, it appears there are no limits regarding these operations being located on private roads (other than notifying others who use the road), ground water use, protections of sensitive habitat, requirements for proximity to police and fire protection, road conditions (steep, narrow), and the like. This poorly considered plan would be a disaster for our county and I strongly oppose inclusion of this code amendment to sites which support single family residential use: R1, R2, R5, R10, UR20, UR 40, Rangeland, TPZ and Forestland.

It may be true that most potential users of the Low Intensity Camping opportunity might be judicious, but it will only take one destructive or careless camper to bring about catastrophe. Picture the camper who decides the rules against open flames can be ignored, or the one who thinks surface disposal of RV effluent is ok because they won't be around to deal with the consequences. Has the intense draw down of ground water when 30 people take their daily showers been considered?

Thirty campers per day driving large RV's, big trucks pulling long trailers will negatively impact nearby parcels with dust, noise and road damage. Neighboring property owners will live in fear of transient campers who could might make an irreversible error in judgement re: fire, effluent disposal or trespass. As written, there are virtually no protections or recourse for neighboring land owners, which will leave neighbors at odds with no options to oppose and no compensation if the worst happens.

Is the Sheriff's Office, CalFire and/or rural volunteer fire departments ready for the added

burden of supervision/protection this proposed “low intensity camping” will create? I understand the Sheriff’s Office is severely short-staffed with few deputies to cover outlying portions of the county. Local fire agencies (mostly volunteer operations) likely aren’t ready for this greatly increased risk of fire or potential added vehicular issues. County infrastructure is not ready for this level of intense use which will bring perilous consequences to rural regions with limited resources and protections.

Who will pay for a massive wild fire started by an irresponsible camper? Fire, noise, odors, dust, road damage, trespass all these concerns will be extant when you open up all R1, R2, R5, R10, UR20, UR 40, Rangeland, TPZ and Forestland parcels to permitted Transient Habitation-Low Intensity Camping. Has anyone considered the additional burden placed on home owners if insurance companies see these nearby camping facilities in aerial reviews of policy holder’s homesite? Insurance companies can access up-to-the minute aerial views of subject properties and nearby conditions. A neighboring campground could negatively impact risk assessment resulting in policy cancellation or cost increases.

Low intensity camping should be implemented in commercial or rural village zoning. Camping facilities would work for those areas since they are near emergency infrastructure; not miles out single, lane gravel roads and in areas of extreme fire danger. The Transient Habitation—Low Intensity Camping concept, if executed as written, puts all county residents at risk of fire loss, possible damage to sensitive habitat and the permanent loss of the quiet enjoyment of their homes.

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