

### Instructions

Send the following letter by email to our Supervisors and the State senators listed below. If you want to edit the letter, you can open the pdf with Microsoft Word or copy the text of the pdf and paste into your word processor or use our letter as a basis for writing your own letter.

### Addresses:

The Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors: [boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov)

Our State Senator John Laird: [senator.laird@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.laird@senate.ca.gov)

Senator Mike McGuire, author of SB-620: [senator.mcguire@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.mcguire@senate.ca.gov)

### How else to help

Make comments in person at the Board of Supervisors meeting scheduled for June 25

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm sympathetic to the goal of increasing the opportunities for residents and tourists to camp in Santa Cruz County, but the proposed so-called "Low Impact Camping Areas" (LICA) ordinance—and SB-620 that would enable it—are grossly deficient. Please do not approve either measure until the following deficiencies are corrected:

**Fire hazard**— Recreation is the single largest cause of wildfires in California (Scientific American, 12/1/23); campgrounds should be prohibited on properties mapped by Cal Fire as "high fire hazard" or "very high fire hazard". Campgrounds should be required to have the same water storage for fire-fighting as local residences. Fire safety should take priority over maximizing the number of campgrounds.

**Generators**—The ordinance must all prohibit generators use. Generators are a nuisance to neighbors, a fire hazard, and are counter to the objective of a natural camping experience. They are prohibited on the 47 permitted commercial cannabis cultivation sites in the County (except for emergency use), and they should be prohibited on the 1300 eligible campground areas in the County.

**Set-backs and noise**—The proposed set-back of 50' from neighboring properties is too small a distance. Campgrounds must be set back far enough from neighboring properties that neighbors can enjoy quiet without having to retreat indoors. A set-back of 200 ft is more appropriate. SB-620 will require that the County enforce quiet hours (evenings and overnight) but specifies that the State will not provide funds for enforcement. The County LICA ordinance should specify how the County will fund its legally mandated enforcement of quiet hours.

**Protection of wildlife**—The County General Plan OBJECTIVE ARC-3.1 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (LCP) establishes the objective: "To maintain the biological diversity of the County through an integrated program that includes ... protection of plant habitat and wildlife corridors and habitats." LICAs should be excluded from habitat for protected species identified as candidate, sensitive, or species of special status by State or federal agencies. Similarly, The Nature Conservancy and Sempervirens have mapped lands that they consider priorities for conservation. Campgrounds should be prohibited in these areas also.

**CEQA review**—The County claims that the ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, based on the "Common Sense Exemption" ("Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment"). To the contrary, the County's proposed LICA ordinance can be expected to have significant adverse impact from wildfire alone. The ordinance should undergo proper CEQA review.

Separate rules for farm stays—Many of the problems with the proposed ordinances could be removed if LICAs were excluded from properties in high fire hazard areas in residential mountain neighborhoods. Why not start a pilot program for farm stays on Agricultural lands outside of hazardous fire areas?

SB-620—The County should wait to develop a LICA ordinance until after the State passes SB-620.

Please reject the Santa Cruz County LICA ordinance and SB-620 unless the deficiencies cited above are corrected.

Sincerely,