

MONTEREY COUNTY



Board of Supervisors

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Monterey County, Fifth District Supervisor

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November 9, 2016

Commissioner Cosme Padilla, Chair
Monterey County Planning Commission
168 W. Alisal Street
Salinas, CA 93906

Re: Support Letter for Prohibiting Short Term Rentals in the Big Sur Land Use Plan

Dear Chair Padilla,

For the last two decades, I have had the distinct honor and privilege of representing the Fifth District of the County of Monterey, dealing with many challenging issues. Without a doubt, the greatest challenge has been in the world of land use and protecting the world renowned county that we are all fortunate enough to call home. For the Fifth District, there is no community who has fought as hard as the Big Sur community to preserve and protect the balance between preservation of the coast, coastal access and retaining a vibrant community that lives and works in Big Sur. A critical component of this balance is retention of affordable housing stock, allowing employees to live close to their jobs, reducing trips on the constrained Highway One and ensuring that Big Sur remains a community of locals to provide stewardship of the coast for future generations and visitors.

The Big Sur Local Coastal Plan has a long history as a successful and community driven planning process that has ensured the protection of the unique environment of the Big Sur Coast. The Big Sur Land Use Plan was created with the work of the Big Sur residents, agency stakeholders, County Planning staff and Coastal Commission staff. This plan focuses on providing public access, affordable housing and preservation of the local community. The Big Sur Land Use Plan has a restricted number of visitor serving units to preserve the local affordable housing units and ensure a thriving business community. Between the hotel units and the variety of camping options currently available in Big Sur, visitors can choose the type of experience they would like to have in Big Sur, and there is no place in Monterey County with a greater ratio of visitor serving units to residents.

Short Term Rentals are having a dramatic impact on the affordable housing stock as nearly all of the STR's in Big Sur were once long term rentals. Since 2008, due to three wildfires over 160 homes have been lost, which has also had an overwhelming negative impact on the housing stock in Big Sur and it will take years to rebuild those homes. The current Land Use Advisory Committee has adopted language in their proposed update that explicitly prohibits Short Term Rentals in the Big Sur Planning Area, reiterating the importance of the goals and values of the original BSLCP.

There is no greater threat to the vibrancy of the Big Sur community than the issue of Short Term Rentals. As you direct staff to draft a short term rental ordinance, I strongly urge you to include a prohibition of Short Term Rentals in the Big Sur Planning Area. I ask that you stand with me as a staunch defender of the coast and the Big Sur community.

Sincerely,


Dave Potter
Supervisor, Fifth District
County of Monterey

CC: All Planning Commissioners, Carl Holm and Melanie Beretti