



@better_LA
betterneighborsla.org

January 10, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
San Rafael, California 94903
BOS@marincounty.org

RE: January 11, 2024 Agenda Item #1 Hearing for a Short-Term Rental Ordinance and Local Coastal Program Amendment

Dear Marin County Board of Supervisors,

Better Neighbors Los Angeles is a coalition of hosts, tenants, housing activists, hotel workers, and community members. We conduct data analysis and research on the short-term rental industry in the Coastal Zone, including relatively recent California Coastal Commission “CCC”) decisions on Local Coastal Program Amendments (“LCPAs”) regulating short-term rentals (“STRs”). We believe true home-sharing is the best way to balance the preservation of affordable housing and coastal public access within the Coastal Zone. True-home sharing policies permit “hosted-only” short-term rentals, i.e., a host living on site. To that end, Better Neighbors LA writes to urge the Marin County Board of Supervisors to amend the proposed regulations and submit an LCPA to the Coastal Commission that permits only true home-sharing within Marin County’s Coastal Zone. Below, we describe how recent actions by the Coastal Commission may support more restrictive regulation.

Marin County Short-Term Rentals Remove Vital Housing Stock

As California continues to battle a housing affordability crisis, it is imperative housing is protected against conversion to tourist accommodations. According to our own data analysis of the short-term rental market in Bolinas, Dillon Beach, Inverness, Lagunitas-Forest Knolls, Muir Beach, Point Reyes Station, San Geronimo, Stinson Beach, Tomales, and Woodacre, on average 93 % of short-term rentals are unhosted.¹ Unhosted short-term rentals occupy housing stock that would otherwise be available to long-term tenants or potential homeowners. Please find a graph

¹ AirDNA data on file with Better Neighbors as of 2023. Data unavailable for Marshall, Nicasio, Olema, and Petaluma.

below that outlines the amount of short-term rentals unhosted and hosted by township, along with the percent of housing stock occupied by short-term rentals in each.

2023 Average Short-Term Rentals in Marin County Coastal Communities²

Community	Unhosted	Hosted	Total	# of housing units	% Housing Stock
Bolinas	45	7	52	937	6%
Dillon Beach	100	0	100	451	22%
Inverness	84	6	90	1,299	7%
Lagunitas-Forest Knolls	17	0	17	897	2%
Muir Beach	11	1	12	209	6%
Point Reyes Station	25	2	27	359	8%
San Geronimo	8	3	11	130	8%
Stinson Beach	110	0	110	765	14%
Tomaes	6	9	15	124	12%
Woodacre	8	0	8	669	1%
Total	414	28	442	5,840	8%

In the City of Los Angeles, we have seen firsthand how short-term rentals, especially corporate short-term rental operators, have taken housing stock off the long-term market. According to a report authored by Professor David Wachsmuth of McGill University published last year, since 2015 short-term rentals have contributed to an increase in rents by \$810 per year and have taken 2,500 homes off the long-term market.³ In addition, the report found short-term rentals have contributed to 5,000 additional people experiencing homelessness within the City.⁴ While one may argue the vast differences between Marin County and the City of Los Angeles, one cannot deny the shared reality of residents across California experiencing rising housing costs. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, approximately a third of all households in Marin County between 2017 and 2021 were renter households with an estimated hourly mean renter wage of \$30.28 as of 2023.⁵ While the monthly rent considered affordable at the mean renter wage is \$1,574, in reality the average fair market rent for a two bedroom is double that, at \$3,188.⁶ This illustrates that many renters in Marin County are likely using a significant portion of their income to meet high housing costs. As unhosted short-term rentals

² AirDNA data on file with Better Neighbors LA. AirDNA does not account for all booking platforms which is likely leading to an undercount of listings when compared to the County's data. Housing stock data: [California, CA Household Income, Population & Demographics | Point2 \(point2homes.com\)](#)

³ http://upgo.lab.mcgill.ca/publication/strs-in-los-angeles-2022/Wachsmuth_LA_2022.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/California_2023_OOR.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

have continued to occupy housing stock, the supply of housing available to long-term residents has likely decreased and may very well be contributing to high housing costs in Marin County.

Precedent for Stronger Regulations in Coastal Jurisdictions

Recent actions by the Coastal Commission suggest that jurisdictions may implement stronger STR regulations in the Coastal Zone than previously allowed by the staff. On December 14, 2023, the California Coastal Commission held an informational briefing on housing during which a set of academic researchers, representatives from coastal cities, and Commissioners expressed how short-term rentals may impact access to long-term housing within the Coastal Zone.⁷ Professor David Wachsmuth of McGill University cited a breadth of recent academic research that outlined how unhosted short-term rentals result in significant negative consequences, including increases in rents and decrease in housing stock.⁸ Specifically, Professor Wachsmuth recommended that “[t]he CCC should consider establishing a common regulatory floor that restricts unhosted STRs and encourages home sharing in the coastal zone, to better preserve public access for visitors...”⁹ Most importantly, several Coastal Commissioners expressed their reactions to the panelists. For example, Commissioner Paloma Aguirre stated, “it was very clear that unhosted short-term rentals are making the housing crisis worse.”¹⁰ Commissioners Mike Wilson, Katie Rice, Meagan Harmon and Dayna Bochco all expressed concerns regarding the issue of short-term rentals within the Coastal Zone.¹¹ One should consider the ways this hearing and discussion may impact future Coastal Commission decisions on LCPAs regulating short-term rentals in the future.

The December informational session followed a relatively recent Coastal Commission LCPA decision to restrict short-term rentals in the City of Half Moon Bay. In March 2023, the Coastal Commission approved the City of Half Moon Bay’s LCPA that included a primary residency requirement for both hosted and unhosted short-term rentals, as well as a 60-night cap on the number of nights an unhosted short-term rental may be rented annually.¹² This decision, coupled with the December informational session, should provide jurisdictions with more confidence to pass stronger short-term rental regulations within the Coastal Zone especially those that ensure the primary use of housing remains housing, while short-term renting remains a secondary use.

Conclusion

⁷ <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2023/12/Th5/Th5-12-2023-agenda.pdf>

⁸ Professor David Wachsmuth, “Short-Term Rentals and Housing: What Are the Issues and What Should We Do?,” December 14, 2023, beginning at 58:45: https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20231214/

⁹ Professor David Wachsmuth, “Short-Term Rentals and Housing: What Are the Issues and What Should We Do?,” December 14, 2023, slide 23 of PowerPoint presentation linked here: https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20231214/.

¹⁰ Commissioner Paloma Aguirre, December 14, 2023 Coastal Commission Hearing, beginning at 4:46:42: https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20231214/

¹¹ December 14, 2023 Coastal Commission Hearing. Commissioner Mike Wilson beginning at 4:43:08. Commissioner Katie Rice beginning at 4:49:47. Meagan Harmon beginning at 5:03:59. Commissioner Dayna Bochco beginning at 5:06:08. Commissioner https://cal-span.org/meeting/ccc_20231214/

¹² City of Half Moon Bay LCP Amendment Number LCP-2-HMB-21-0078-2: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2023/3>

For these reasons, Better Neighbors urges the Board of Supervisors to consider revising the draft regulations to permit only true home-sharing because it is the best way to balance the preservation of affordable housing and coastal public access within the Coastal Zone. Should you have any questions, please contact Becca Ayala at rebecca@betterneighborsla.org.

Sincerely,

/s/ Randy Renick