



SONOMA COUNTY
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

March 15, 2023

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Re: Vacation Rental Ordinance – Proposed Zoning Changes

Dear Sonoma County Planning Commissioners:

The Sonoma County Hospitality Association (SCHA) supports reasonable approaches to managing potential overconcentration of vacation rentals in specific neighborhoods and using data and fact-based decision making rather than emotional arguments and anecdotes as a driver of decisions. Decisions to further restrict vacation rentals in the County should take into consideration the positive contributions of short-term rentals and extensive outreach and involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders.

SCHA represents the diverse business segments that make up the hospitality and tourism industry in Sonoma County, including restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rentals, retailers, wineries, recreation providers, transportation providers, attractions, and more. The taxes collected by hospitality establishments from visitors to the region and taxes paid by the hospitality workforce contribute to county and regional funding.

The hospitality industry employs 1 in 11 workers in Sonoma County. The overwhelming majority of hospitality businesses who depend on business from overnight visitors who stay in a variety of overnight accommodations, including vacation rentals. The new ordinance approved by the BOS last August, especially the business license program, performance standards and stricter and consistent enforcement will go a long way to supporting our local neighborhoods and addressing the small number of short-term rental properties which are the source of repetitive complaints.

We oppose significant expansion of the X-Overlay areas and the X combining zone caps in advance of implementing the new ordinance a enforcement standards. Short term rentals are already prohibited on R2 and R3 parcels in dense neighborhoods. Implementing a county wide ban on short term rentals on all R1 parcels throughout the county is not necessary, and a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach should be undertaken. Keep in mind that the concentration data presented by staff likely overstates the concentration of short term rental properties because many properties which had permits which have been sold or are no longer operating have not been removed from the books.

The county's own economic study of the impact of VR's on housing availability and prices should little to no impact on the price of housing and the shortage housing supply.

SCH is committed to continuing to engage with the county and stakeholders on this important issue.

Sincerely,

The Sonoma County Hospitality Association Board of Directors