

COUNTY OF SONOMA**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Sonoma County gives initial approval to lowering cap on rent increases for mobile homes

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The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted to limit annual rent increases at mobile home parks in unincorporated areas to no more than 4 percent or 70 percent of the Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. The amendments to the mobile home ordinance bring Sonoma County's policy in line with recent updates passed by cities in the county.

"Individuals living in mobile homes often are lower-income and have little choice when the landlord raises the rent on their park space," said Supervisor Chris Coursey, chair of the Board of Supervisors. "While they own their home, they are unable to pick up and move it elsewhere. The amendments to this ordinance are similar to those used by local municipalities and are designed to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our community."

The amendments, which will be adopted upon a second reading scheduled for Nov. 7, would also allow a mobile home park owner to raise a rent up to 5 percent when ownership of an on-site mobile home changes ownership. Currently, the county caps annual increases at 6 percent or 100 percent of annual CPI, whichever is less. The county also does not have any limits on increases when a mobile home changes owners. The ordinance, if adopted on a second reading on Nov. 7, would take effect 30 days later.

Limiting rent increases on any mobile home space can protect mobile home residents from displacement. A significant number of mobile home residents in unincorporated areas are on fixed incomes and can afford only modest rent increases. The changes approved by the Board on Tuesday would require all written notices to residents to be provided in English and Spanish.

Mobile homes and mobile home parks provide an important alternative form of housing for a substantial number of county residents. While many mobile homes are owned by their occupants, it is common for owners to rent spaces in mobile home parks. Despite the name, mobile homes are difficult and expensive to move. Some require permanent fixtures, which limit their ability to be relocated. As a result, many tenants must remain where they are situated and pay the rent required by mobile home park owners.

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