



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

Board of Supervisors

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March 10, 2025

The Honorable Chris Ward
Capitol Office
1021 O Street, Suite 6350
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: AB 518: Low-Impact Camping Areas - Oppose

Dear Assemblymember Ward,

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is writing in respectful but adamant opposition to AB 518 regarding new residential camping laws. This unneeded measure, if adopted locally, could cause disruption and potential chaos in communities throughout California. Siskiyou County does not have the resources or capability to fully prevent or control those enforcement issues and neighbor disputes that will assuredly occur should this bill be enacted.

AB 518 permits individual homeowners to rent out their driveways, backyards, and other property to campers without the property owner securing a State-issued campground permit. Further this measure will allow the property to have up to 9 separate camp sites which individual campers can stay at for up to two weeks at a time per camper, for a total of 28 days in a calendar year, year-round. This means that homeowners could have year-round encampments in their driveways. There is no requirement that the camping facilities be screened from neighboring properties. While urbanized cities are exempted from this bill, this will affect suburban and rural areas with a minimum 2-acre parcel, where neighbors can still see each other's homes, driveways and yards. There is no requirement in the measure that property owner or manager be present on site. There is no prohibition on allowing camping in high fire severity zones.

The irony of this bill legalizing encampments of up to 9 separate tents at one property in residential neighborhoods while counties and cities have been chastised by the State's elected leaders regarding the challenges of clearing homeless encampments from public spaces is astounding. Imagine the hurdles of moving encampments off of private property where the property owner has been authorized by state law to rent out their private property – in full view of entire neighborhoods. Local agencies will be hamstrung by property owners who are unmoved by the negative impacts on their own neighbors, and the noise and garbage issues that will undoubtedly occur no matter how strenuous the county's requirements will be on property owners who attempt to use this new law.

This measure idealizes the opportunity for more residents and visitors to experience California's outdoor space. But the measure fails to account for how this bill will be abused by absentee landlords and property owners engaged in illicit activities that need low-cost

Jess Harris
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labor. For example, Siskiyou County faces enormous challenges with the illicit cannabis growers in our rural and ranchette neighborhoods. It would be all but guaranteed this measure would be used to house workers who tend to those crops, making it even harder for the county to enforce state and local laws

Further, the fire risk, groundwater contamination, and quality of life for suburban and rural neighborhoods will be further compromised by inviting visitors unfamiliar with local fire risk, our public sewer and storm drain laws and noise ordinances to set up camp in neighborhoods where the property owner many not even be home or on the property, leaving negatively-affected neighbors to suffer the consequences of campers who are unaware or unwilling to comply with the requirements of this measure, which could lead to violent confrontations or very likely **endless new calls for public safety dispatch**.

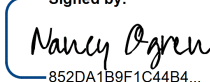
There is no need to expand to private property the ability for visitors to camp in California's residential rural areas. Rural counties do not have the staff and resources to enforce such granular behavior of individual property owners who could turn over the camping population on their property every 14 days.

Furthermore, this measure is grossly premature. Given the proliferation of online platforms assisting property owners in turning their homes into hotels and their yards into unpermitted and unregulated campgrounds, while facilitating the evasion of local taxation laws and land use controls, the Legislature first needs to seriously address the gaps in current law that govern the online platforms that facilitate these arrangements. Until current law provides local agencies with sufficient tools to ensure that these platform operators cooperate with local governments on the location of these host properties in order to ensure tax and land use compliance, including addressing fire risk, there is simply no good reason to move forward with legislation such as this. Furthermore, since this measure - if enacted - would spark inconsistency with respect to where this camping activity is allowed and what local requirements are placed on that activity, but does not ensure that the addresses of these locations are known and reported to the local agency when listed on the platforms, it will be all but impossible for local governments who have **not** opted into this activity to know if it's happening in their jurisdiction anyway, since the proponents of this measure do not report addresses to local agencies.

Therefore, due to the potential negative impact to our already thinly stretched resources and the quality of life for our residents, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors adamantly opposes AB 518.

Sincerely,

Signed by:



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Nancy Ogren

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Megan Dahle
Assemblymember Heather Hadwick
Rural County Representatives of California
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lang