



FAQ: Short-Term Rental Proposal for Mendocino County

1. Q: Aren't most Short-Term Rentals (STRs) too expensive for people to buy or rent?

A: A surprising number of short-term vacation rentals are modest houses, without ocean views. Hundreds are houses professionals and average-income families could buy or rent. A recent search for 'Mendocino Coast Vacation Rentals' on VRBO showed less than half of the listings are ocean or beach front properties. Search for rents of \$200 or less, and you'll find 25% of the listings are small houses or 2nd units in regular areas.

2. Q: Will licensing and limiting commercial STRs fix the housing shortage?

A: No, but it will make a big difference, especially on the Coast. Of the County's 500 vacation homes, 90% are coastal. That's 4% of area housing. If we cap the number of commercial STRs at 2% of area housing, and stop permitting more until we're below the 2% threshold, the coast would save 50 to 100 houses, assuming STRs grow 10-20% as forecasted. Even better, we can reclaim 100+ houses by making STR licenses non-transferable. If we cancel licenses when STRs sell or change owners, their number will organically go from 4% to 2%.

3. Q: Why can't people be allowed to do what they want with their property?

A: Until recently, people didn't care if a few folks rented their home to tourists. It didn't hurt long-term housing or change the nature of residential neighborhoods. Now however, a flood of real-estate-investment STRs are destroying the economic and social fabric of our communities. Regulating these commercial STRs is the only way to protect long-term housing and make neighborhoods safer, nicer places to live.

4. Q: Would STR regulations let me rent rooms, or my house, to tourists?

A: Yes. You'd just need a license, and be able to prove that it's your primary-residence. There'd be no limit on the number of days you could rent rooms, but days you could use your house as a vacation rental would be capped at 90 a year.

5. Q: Won't getting rid of vacation rentals keep tourists from coming here?

A: No, because the County wouldn't get rid of all vacation rentals. The regulations would just stop allowing *more* commercial STRs until there aren't as many. When there's a workable balance of long and short-term housing, licensing commercial vacation rentals would resume. Also, there will still be vacation rentals owned by people who live full-time in their property listings.

6. Q: What about STRs we already have?

A: Existing STRs in good standing should have to get licensed, but then they'd be allowed to continue renting, until they're sold or ownership is transferred.

7. Q: Can people rent second-homes to tourists?

A: Second-home vacation rentals would be treated like other commercial STRs. So, if it's already a STR in good standing, it can get licensed and continue renting. But if it changes owners, it can only be licensed if commercial STRs are below the 2% threshold.