

Heidi Willson

From: Sonja Bush <sonja@destinationmammoth.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 4:35 PM
To: CDD Comments; Comm Dev
Subject: Opposition to Proposed Changes in General Plan Amendment 25-01 and Mono County Code 5.65

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Members of the Mono County Planning Commission,

I am writing today not only as a real estate broker, but as a citizen deeply committed to the welfare of Mono County and its residents. Our community is at a pivotal juncture, and I urge you to carefully consider the unintended consequences of the proposed changes to short-term rental rules under **General Plan Amendment 25-01** and **Mono County Code 5.65**.

While I understand the concerns behind these proposals, they will have a significant negative impact on homeowners and the broader economy of Mono County.

The Real Impact on Our Community

The majority of property owners I work with are not large-scale investors. They are families who purchase in Mono County because they love the area and want to spend time here, creating lasting memories. Some rent nightly to offset costs such as HOA fees, insurance, and utilities. Contrary to common assumptions, most are not making large profits—nightly rental income simply helps them manage the high cost of ownership. Before making sweeping changes, it would be wise to survey property owners across the county to understand how they truly use and depend on their rentals.

Effectiveness of the Proposal

Restricting or eliminating nightly rentals will not meaningfully solve the workforce housing issue. Owners of condos or single-family homes who use their properties as second homes are unlikely to convert them to long-term rentals. I know this firsthand—I started as a second homeowner myself, and our family visited regularly. We would not have rented our property long-term, and many others feel the same.

Legal and Financial Consequences

Many property owners purchased with the clear understanding that nightly rentals were permitted, relying on disclosures, county records, and the Mono County parcel viewer. To suddenly strip away this right not only risks lawsuits but also erodes public trust in county leadership. Some owners have invested heavily in renovations with the intention of renting nightly. These proposed changes could expose the county to costly legal battles and undermine confidence in Mono County as a place to invest.

Economic Impact

The ripple effect on the local economy cannot be ignored. Short-term rentals generate significant **Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)** revenue, which directly funds essential county services. In addition, the nightly rental industry supports a wide network of local workers—housekeepers, property managers, electricians, plumbers, inspectors, and handymen. Restricting this activity risks job loss, reduced revenue, and long-term economic harm to our communities.

Exploring Better Solutions

Instead of restricting homeowners, let's focus on real solutions:

- **Encouraging voluntary participation:** Many properties sit vacant most of the year. Outreach programs could encourage owners to consider long-term rentals, with support from Mono County Housing or similar organizations to handle screening, leases, and management.
- **Supporting ADUs:** Provide financial incentives, tax breaks, and streamlined permitting to encourage single-family homeowners to build **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**.
- **Regional housing projects:** Explore housing development in nearby communities like Crowley Lake, Chalfant, or Bishop, where more land is available.

In Conclusion

These proposed changes will not address the underlying housing challenges but will instead create new hardships—legal disputes, economic fallout, and strained community relations. I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to reject these proposals and instead work collaboratively toward solutions that expand workforce housing without stripping away existing rights or destabilizing Mono County's economy.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. I welcome the opportunity for further discussion on this matter.

Sincerely,
Sonja Bush
Broker | Owner
Destination Real Estate

