

Santa Barbara Happenings

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Proposed SB Tenant Right to Return Rule Intended to Help Tenants, but What Will the Actual Consequences Be?

The Santa Barbara City Council has proposed new rules that affect landlords and tenants after renovations made by the property owner. The proposal asserts that after a tenant has been evicted by property renovations, property owners cannot raise rent by more than 10%. Offers must start at the original price, plus 5% and the cost of living according to the Consumer Price Index, but still not more than 10%. It does not matter how much was spent on the repairs. The proposal also requires a third-party contractor with certification from the State License Board to affirm the eviction of the tenant due to safety concerns. Additionally, a "cooling-off period" is planned that disallows any renovations or demolitions for at least one year after acquiring a property of five units or more.

Opponents argue these restrictions disincentivize property owners from renovating their properties. Upgrades and tenant choice to rent better units will be a thing of the past.



Image: Noozhawk.com

Goleta's Recommendations for Short-Term Vacation Rentals

The Goleta planning commission recently recommended adopting an ordinance that would regulate short-term vacation rentals. The commission plans to review limiting the number of rentals, restricting rentals to owner occupied properties only, implementing a waiting period, and discouraging property owners from evicting tenants in favor of vacation rentals.

In Goleta, there were \$245,856 of transient occu-

pancy taxes total generated from 51 active short-term rentals in August of 2024. Now, there are only 24 active, 84 inactive, and 24 pending permits this year, showing that permit owners have chosen not to renew since last August.

400 Housing Units Added in SB County in 2024

The Santa Barbara County Planning Commission presented their annual report detailing the housing units added in the north and south regions of the county in 2024. There were 290 units added in the south county which consisted of 125 accessory dwelling units, 80 single-family homes, 11 manufactured homes, three agricultural employee dwellings, and structures that made up 71 units of duplex, triplex, and a multiple-family dwelling. The north region added 110 units: 94 accessory dwelling units, 12 single family homes, three manufactured homes, and one agricultural employee dwelling.

The south nearly doubled the number of units they added from 2023 to 2024. The north, however, added 47 less units when compared from 2023 to 2024.

Unless changes occur, Santa Barbara County is required to add 4,142 new dwellings by 2031 as part of the State mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

California Finds Itself in Energy Crisis After Failed Green Energy Policies



Oil company British Petroleum's CEO Murray Auchincloss has begun reversing on the efforts and investments BP put into green energy. The CEO indicated BP's optimism on the transition to clean, renewable energy was misplaced. The company will cut their investments in renewable energy in California by over half.

Environmental Protection Agency Bloated

EPA administrator Lee Zeldin discovered that 65% of the EPA's budget can be cut, citing \$20 billion of fraudulent spending found in recent years. Zeldin claims that a big increase spent by the past administration was for unneeded grants and payments to unaccountable NGO's.

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The Next Ice Age is Coming...

Researchers at UC Santa Barbara, with combined efforts from international researchers, have used various new variables to determine that Earth's next ice age will appear in roughly 10,000 years. The team was able to base their findings on small changes in the earth's orbit of the sun, matching changes of the size of ice sheets on land and the temperature of the ocean, small variations in the cycle of earth's orbit, the angle of earth's tilt, and the axial precession or "wobble" of the earth.

The team solved the difficulty of determining which of the planet's parameters were the most crucial to making the prediction. Overall, the research shows that we are currently in a stable, interglacial period known as the Holocene. The researchers were able to determine a predictable pattern dating back nearly a million years, absent of greenhouse gases.

These predictions will greatly help how researchers are able to make decisions regarding the future of greenhouse gas emissions and "climate change".

SB Unified School District's Failed "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" Program

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter to all school districts, including the Santa Barbara Unified School District, denouncing discrimination based on race and natural origin. The letter, meant to directly reject the "diversity, equity, and inclusion" or "DEI" programs such as the one instituted by the district, was ignored by district board President Gabe Escobedo, who claimed the letter was a mere fear mongering tactic.

The seven years following the start of the program was an overall failure. The district saw no changes in the educational gaps. In fact, there were more racist incidents reported by students and staff across the district.

Despite this, the school district and its leaders continue to promote the failed ideology and program.

Tri-County Produce on South Milpas to Close and Become Apartments

After first opening in 1966 as a wholesale distributor, the landmark and popular produce store Tri-County Produce will be closed by the end of April. The store, which became a farmers' market in 1976, has been offering fresh and local crops and goods to the residents of Santa Barbara and all around. In 1985, when the store was purchased by father-son duo Jim and John Dixon, the selections of the market grew to include more natural foods, meats, and alcoholic beverages.



Image: sitelinesb.com

As son John Dixon enters his mid-sixties, he believed it was time for him to move on to retirement. He recently sold portions of the land to developers and investors to create more housing in the Santa Barbara area. The development plan includes 10 studios, 18 one-bedroom, and 25 two-bedroom units in a pre-existing, four-story building on the store's property.

Neighbors of Carpinteria Cannabis Farm Eligible to Seek Collective Damages

Santa Barbara Superior Court Judge Thomas Anderle ruled that neighbors who live in a one-mile radius of cannabis harvesting plant Valley Crest Farms are eligible to collectively seek damages. This is due to the odor produced by the farm that neighbors have complained about daily. Homeowners must show how Valley Crest Farm's production has affected the enjoyment and value of their property to qualify for damages. There are around 100 homes within a one-mile radius of the farm.

Plaintiffs are pushing for the farm to install "scrubbers", or carbon filtration systems. These systems are expensive yet are shown to be effective at eliminating much of the smell before it leaves the greenhouse. If the case does not get settled, jury trial has been scheduled for March 5, 2026.

The county Board of Supervisors have shown interest in prioritizing these scrubbers be mandated for all cannabis greenhouse operations in Carpinteria. Growers would have one year to adjust to the change.



Image: Independent.com

[Ed NOTE: On 3-18-2025, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors voted to require carbon scrubbers for operators throughout the county.]

More Building Projects Proposed in Isla Vista

As the ever-lasting issue of housing persists in Isla Vista, the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission decided to revisit property management company Ed St. George's 16-unit apartment buildings proposition located on El Sueno Road. The plan in-

cludes a trio of three-story apartment buildings, each with three-bedroom apartments: seven in one building, six in the next, and three in the third. Two will be extremely low-income units and two others will be moderate income units. The addition of low-income units allows the developers to increase the density of their plan.

The lot currently holds a family within a single- and two-story home built in 1913 with .65 acres of land. Onsite parking is not required. The proposition presents problems to the neighbors in the area. Already, Isla Vista has a parking problem. The town is constantly over its parking capacity, yet this project would only bring more chaos over the issue. Future residents will be required to find spots on the street for their car.

Due to the State's Housing Accountability Act, the commission is unable to deny St. George's project due to its emphasis on affordable housing. The development may be rejected only if it presents major health or safety concerns to the public.

Is it time yet to elect better state representatives?

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