



PRESS RELEASE

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Rio Dell City Council to Consider Rental Housing Inspection Program

The Rio Dell City Council is scheduled to consider a Rental Housing Inspection ordinance at their meeting on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. The proposed ordinance is motivated by the December 20, 2022, Ferndale Earthquake and the January 1, 2023 aftershock. CAL-OES inspectors and other response and recovery partners widely reported that they observed a significant number of substandard rental units.

"It's clear following the earthquakes that the status quo cannot stand and that changes need to be made to increase quality and safety." Stated Rio Dell City Manager Kyle Knopp.

Many tenants will not report substandard conditions because of the fear of losing their housing. On the other hand, some tenants do not properly maintain the units they live in or the property the units are on. When discussed with the City's Nuisance Advisory Committee, the Committee recommended that the City consider establishing a Rental Housing Inspection Program. The City's Planning Commission recommended the draft Ordinance language on November 28th of 2023.

There are approximately 640 rentals in the City. The Rio Dell Fire Protection District (RDFPD) is responsible for inspecting multifamily properties containing more than three (3) units. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) regulates mobile home parks. That leaves approximately 465 units that the City would be responsible for.

The draft ordinance allows self-certification that the rental units comply with state-adopted Building Codes, Health and Safety Codes, the Uniform Housing Code, the International Property Maintenance Code and the Rio Dell Municipal Code. Tenants are required to attest to the self-certification.

The proposed fees for City inspected units include the \$15.00 annual registration fee and a \$55.00 inspection fee once every three years. This equates to approximately \$2.78 a month over a three year period. The fees for self-inspected units would be \$45.00 a year or \$3.75 a month.

Community Development Director Kevin Caldwell stated: “The City is actively working to eliminate blight and substandard housing in order to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing. We believe this is a win for both tenants and landlords and ultimately makes us better prepared as a community to face future seismic events and improve the housing stock.”

The Rental Housing Inspection Program ordinance will receive its first reading on January 2, 2024. The Council meeting begins at 6:00pm at 675 Wildwood Avenue in Rio Dell. Interested members of the public are encouraged to attend and may also submit comment on the proposal via email at publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov

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