

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

DECEMBER 8, 2020

Addressing Wastewater Disposal Concerns Due to Residential R.V. Use

Over the past several years, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken a number of actions to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness through the creation and expansion of Safe Parking Programs for vehicles. Traditional Safe Parking Programs give people living in their vehicles a safe environment in which to rest, access resources, and work towards stabilization.

Most recently, on November 10, 2020, the Board approved the Interim and Supportive Housing Ordinance (ISHO) which is intended to encourage development of housing for people experiencing homelessness (shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing), and to support temporary vehicle living. The Ordinance supports temporary vehicle living through the provision of development standards for accessory overnight safe parking and expanded parking options for RVs.

RVs are designed to hold wastewater in a storage tank and are required to discharge wastewater at approved dump stations. The connection of a domestic water line and sewage line may allow RV wastewater to be disposed of into a dwelling’s sewer line for disposal into a public sewer or approved septic system.

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However, some properties where a RV may temporarily park may not be able to support the additional wastewater flows from a RV or may not have appropriate sewer or septic tank hook-up. The disposal of RV wastewater in an unapproved method, such as onto the ground surface or directly into a storm drain, may contaminate surface water or groundwater, may attract vermin, and can spread a range of diseases and is a public health concern.

The ISHO of November 10, 2020 specifies what is required for the Department of Regional Planning for the temporary occupancy of a RV, but it does not specify what permits or approvals are required from other departments for the temporary occupancy of a RV on a rural property, resulting in the potential for RVs being occupied without proper sewer hookups. In addition, there may be occupied RVs located on public or private property beyond what is allowed under the ISHO.

An educational campaign identifying the need for proper sewage hookups for RVs, the potential for contaminating groundwater with bacteria and chemicals that may render drinking water wells in the area unsafe for use, and the potential effects of surface water contamination may help alleviate potential contamination through proper connection of RVs. The Department of Public Health has received 25 complaints regarding sewage discharges in the Antelope Valley within the last 6 months. A creative solution to allow RVs to be utilized as temporary housing during this time of unprecedented housing affordability crisis, while still adhering to necessary health and safety aspects of wastewater disposal, is necessary.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct:

- 1) The Department of Public Health (Public Health) to conduct a review of the complaints related to sewage/wastewater disposal to identify those involving residential RV use at properties within the Antelope Valley, including those properties where unpermitted disposal of wastewater, or lack of hook up to a sanitary wastewater disposal system has occurred;

- 2) Public Health to work with other county departments to identify if any permits are required for wastewater disposal through a property's sewer line and develop educational materials and an outreach plan to help inform RV residents about wastewater disposal requirements during such time as the RV is being used for temporary housing;
- 3) Public Health to work with the Chief Executive Office-Homeless Initiative, Department of Public Works, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority to explore potential creative solutions to provide free mobile wastewater disposal services to locations in the unincorporated areas where RVs tend to cluster, with a particular emphasis on rural areas within the Antelope Valley; and
- 4) Public Health to work with the Department of Public Works and the Chief Executive Office-Homeless Initiative and LAHSA to develop inspection and enforcement strategies under the appropriate Health & Safety codes to ensure proper disposal of wastewater by residential RV users for those RVs being used as temporary shelter under the ISHO.

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CATEGORIES: (Please check those that apply)

- 1. Child Welfare
- 2. Community and Youth Empowerment
- 3. County Services
- 4. Economic Justice
- 5. Economic and Workforce Development
- 6. Education
- 7. Environment
- 8. Fiscal
- 9. Governance
- 10. Health
- 11. Homelessness
- 12. Immigration
- 13. Public Safety
- 14. Social Justice and Human Rights
- 15. Technology and Data
- 16. Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy
- 17. Legislation
- 18. Parks and Open Space
- 19. Planning/Land Use
- 20. Transportation
- 21. Veterans