



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: General Services
Department No.: 063
Agenda Date: October 7, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Kirk A. Lagerquist, Director, General Services
Contact: Ted Teyber, Assistant Director, General Services
SUBJECT: Appointment of Mobilehome Rent Control Arbitrators, Santa Barbara County Code of Ordinances Chapter 11A – Mobilehome Rent Control, All Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Reappoint the following candidate to the County of Santa Barbara's Panel of prospective Mobilehome Rent Control Arbitrators:
 - i) Luis Esparza, Attorney at Law
- b) Appoint the following four (4) candidates to the County of Santa Barbara's Panel of prospective Mobilehome Rent Control Arbitrators:
 - i) L. Donald Boden, Attorney at Law
 - ii) Janean Acevedo Daniels, Attorney at Law
 - iii) John Derrick, Attorney at Law
 - iv) Janet K. McGinnis, Attorney at Law
- c) Appoint the following additional candidate to the County of Santa Barbara's Panel of prospective Mobilehome Arbitrators, in the event that a resignation or other removal reduces the panel to less than five (5).
 - i) Joan Vignocchi, Attorney at Law
- d) Determine that the Board's appointment and reappointment of Mobilehome Rent Control Arbitrators is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), as it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

Santa Barbara County Code Chapter 11A – Mobilehome Rent Control, governs disputes between mobilehome homeowners and mobilehome park management arising from increases in rent. The Ordinance establishes an arbitration process to resolve such disputes and requires the Board of Supervisors to maintain a panel of qualified arbitrators to preside over hearings. The panel must include at least five members, and propose additional candidates in the event there's a resignation or removal.

Discussion:

Arbitrators play a central role in administering the Mobilehome Rent Control Ordinance. Under Chapter 11A, park management may impose rent increases up to 75 percent of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) automatically. When a proposed rent increase exceeds this threshold, homeowners may file a verified petition, and arbitration is required to determine whether the increase is justified. In such cases, arbitrators preside over hearings and rehearings, take testimony and evidence, rule on procedural and evidentiary matters, and may require financial documentation to evaluate operating costs, capital expenses, or improvements offered to justify the increase. Arbitrators then prepare a written Statement of Decision and Findings, supported by a preponderance of the evidence, which sets the allowable rent schedule and becomes part of the public record. Their decisions are final, subject only to limited review by the Board of Supervisors or the courts. Arbitrators must remain independent and impartial, avoid conflicts of interest, and apply the Ordinance consistently to balance the rights of mobilehome homeowners with the fair return due to park owners.

For reference, the most recent CPI for the Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim region for urban wage earners and clerical workers increased 3.2 percent over the past 12 months (as of July 2025), meaning the Ordinance currently permits an automatic increase of approximately 2.4 percent without arbitration. By comparison, over the past ten years, CPI inflation nationally has averaged about 2.6 percent annually, equating to a 75 percent threshold of roughly 1.9 percent per year.

To identify qualified candidates, the Real Property Division of General Services advertised for applicants in the Santa Barbara County Bar Association's newsletter and through professional networks, consistent with prior recruitment practices. However, after receiving no responses, Real Property subsequently contacted members of local arbitration and mediation associations and pursued leads provided by other qualified individuals within the community. Interested individuals were required to submit a curriculum vitae, and statement of eligibility. After review, staff determined that the candidates meet all statutory requirements and are qualified to serve. Board action is necessary at this time to appoint and or reappoint the above-mentioned candidates to the County's panel of five Mobilehome Rent Control Arbitrators, and one alternate to ensure sufficient availability in the event of resignations, conflicts of interest, or other unavailability.

Background:

The County Mobilehome Rent Control Ordinance (Chapter 11A of the County Code), adopted on October 22, 1979, was enacted to protect the owners and occupiers of mobilehomes from unreasonable rents, while recognizing the need for mobilehome park owners to receive a fair return on their investment and to apply rent increases sufficient to cover their increased costs. The purpose of Chapter 11A is to alleviate potential hardship on mobilehome homeowners by imposing rent controls in mobilehome parks within the unincorporated area of the County of Santa Barbara, while protecting the park owners' right to a fair return on their investment.

Section 11A-4 of the Ordinance establishes an arbitration process to resolve disputes between mobilehome homeowners and park owners arising from increases in rent. Arbitrators are required

to preside at all hearings and rehearings regarding maximum rent increase schedules, and to make findings and decisions on such increases in accordance with the Ordinance and the Mobilehome Rent Control Rules for Hearings.

The Ordinance requires that the Board of Supervisors appoint a panel of arbitrators to be available for hearings. While five qualified arbitrators are the legal minimum, the County is advised to appoint additional candidates, to ensure sufficient availability in the event of resignations, conflicts of interest, or other unavailability. Arbitrators are compensated at the same hourly rate as Hearing Officers for the County's Civil Service Commission. Following a recent adjustment, the current compensation rate is \$260 per hour, inclusive of preparation and decision-writing time.

The Real Property Division of General Service's staff is responsible for proposing qualified candidates to the Board for appointment or reappointment as necessary to maintain the panel.

Performance Measure:

Arbitrators must be a currently licensed attorney or CPA in good standing. Arbitrators must not have a financial interest in any Mobilehome Park.

Contract Renewals:

Arbitrators serve at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The current compensation rate for an Arbitrator is \$260 per hour, inclusive of preparation and decision-writing time. Under the Mobilehome Rent Control Ordinance, partial cost recovery is authorized through a filing fee paid by park management of \$10 per space. Management may pass through 50 percent of this fee to residents. Within the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County, there are 21 mobilehome parks with an average of 218 spaces per park, resulting in an average reimbursement of \$2,180 for any certified petition.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Arbitrator CVs

Contact Information:

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