

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Group 1

# 2



**From:** Anne Anderson <a.bushnell.anderson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 11, 2024 10:27 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Del Cielo Mobile Estates possible rent increase arbitration

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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To: Santa Barbara County Supervisors  
November 11, 2024

First, I want to thank you for your support of the homeowners of Del Cielo Mobile Estates last week. Your unanimous passage of the emergency ordinance will pave the way toward preserving affordable housing for seniors in the mobilehome parks in our County!

I just wanted to let you know, however, that the citizens of Del Cielo are not out of the woods yet. **There is another ticking clock.** On September 27, Harmony sent them a notice of rent increase, based upon increased property taxes when they bought the park last spring. This increase will be \$57.40 per month or about \$688 per year for each resident, and **will become effective on January 1, 2025**, 90 days after the notice was sent as per the Mobilehome Residency Law.

**The residents wish to appeal, and have submitted a petition for arbitration according to the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.**

I just want to draw your attention to a strange rule in our RSO that says that **if the arbitration has not begun (or is in progress) at the time that the rent increase is to take effect, the homeowners must go ahead and start paying it**, even though no decision has been made yet by the arbitrator. (There are only four out of the more than 100 RSOs in the state that include this requirement, and two of them – Goleta and Buellton – inherited it from our County when they became cities.)

The subsection in question specifies that the park owner is to put the amount of the increase that is over and above the allowable CPI increase into an escrow account, so that it can be awarded to the winner of the arbitration. However, the ordinance doesn't set forth any method for ensuring that the park owner does so.

As you can imagine, this rule can incentivize the park owners to draw out the proceedings as much as possible. In the case of Nomad Village, a park down the street from mine, it went on for six years. The final settlement reduced the amount that the homeowners were required to pay, and they did finally get some of their money back at the end of the six years, but by that time some of them had passed away and others had left the park.

The residents of Blue Skies, the park that sits between Nomad Village and my park, received notice of a rent increase a number of years ago. The homeowners believed there was good cause to request arbitration, but because they knew what had happened to Nomad Village, they decided not to risk it.

The same thing happened with a park in Goleta (which has the same RSO) a few years later. In that case, the residents were divided over whether they should risk arbitration or not. They knew all about Blue Skies backing out, because they had the same park owner and the residents of both parks had connections through GSMOL. Eventually the group who did not want to go to arbitration won out.

Clearly this rule in our RSO (and Goleta's) discourages homeowners from standing up for their rights, and encourages park owners to stall the progress of an arbitration as much as possible.

This is why I wanted to give you a heads-up, to use any influence you have to get the arbitration for Del Cielo going soon, so that there will be the best chance of ending the case before the increase goes into effect on January 1.

It's hard to know why anyone would put such a rule into a rent stabilization ordinance that is supposed to make space rent reasonable for us, the captive consumers who own homes in mobilehome parks. In case you should decide to consider having it removed, I have quoted the relevant subsections below. GSMOL attorney Bruce Stanton has assured me that removing these two subsections would not be substantial enough to trigger the Statute of Limitations. I am encouraged by your show of support for the Del Cielo residents in their battle to save their senior park, and have decided to hope that maybe now is a good time to do one small thing that could be of help to them in the coming months, and would be the first step toward bringing our RSO into the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Thanks again for your consideration and support!!!

Anne Anderson  
GSMOL State President  
President, GSMOL Chapter 49 of Rancho Santa Barbara

**It would be great to see subsections (b) and (c) (italicized) removed from this section:**

**Sec. 11A-8. - Collection and frequency of increases.**

(a) Management may increase the maximum rent increase schedule no more than once a year for tenancies not subject to a lease. Assuming proper notice, management may collect increases as of the effective date of increase specified in the notice.

*(b) Where a homeowner majority has petitioned for a hearing on an increase and the hearing is to be held after the effective date of increase, management may collect the increase pending the arbitrator's decision; however, any portion of an increase in excess of seventy-five percent of the CPI increase shall be placed in an interest-bearing account in the name of management as trustee for the homeowners of that park.*

*(1) Where the arbitrator approves the full amount of noticed increase, management shall be entitled to retain the full amount in the interest-bearing account together with accrued interest, if any.*

*(2) Where the arbitrator approves an increase in an amount less than the amount noticed, management shall be entitled to the full amount in the interest-bearing account subject to a homeowner credit against future rent. The amount of the credit shall be the difference between the amount deposited in the interest-bearing account and the amount approved, plus a proportional amount of the interest, if any, prorated among the tenancies. Management shall notify each homeowner in writing of the amount of credit.*

*(c) Where a new maximum rent increase schedule has been set by the board of supervisors upon review or by the arbitrator upon rehearing, adjustments in rent paid shall be made in accordance with subsection (b)(1) and (2) of this section.*

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Jesse Ponce <delcielo154@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2024 7:53 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Del Cielo Mobile home park

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We want to thank the entire board for passing the Moretorium and standing up to Harmony. We are excited that in December you all will present the "Senior Park Overlay". Thank you again for doing the right thing.  
Jesse Ponce a resident at Del Cielo Space 154

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Deborah Clark <az\_dc@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2024 10:13 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Senior Overlay

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As a homeowner in a senior mobile home park, I appreciate your determination to stand tough and continue the process of getting the Senior Overlay established!

Thank you!  
Deborah Clark

**Katherine Douglas**

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**From:** Bonnie Hope <bonnie@musicbybonnie.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2024 2:09 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Preventing the conversion of any senior MHPs to all-ages

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Hello!

**I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate your determination to stand tough and continue the process of getting the Senior Overlay established in Santa Barbara County.**

**Many thanks,  
Bonnie Hope**

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** genecorbin@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024 7:28 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Moratorium action - Ref: Del Cielo MHP vs Harmony

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**Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.**

Even though my wife and I do not live in Del Cielo we wanted to express our appreciation to all of the supervisors in Santa Barbara County for the action they have taken in issuing this moratorium in preparation for a Senior Park Overlay to be instituted in the near future to protect the seniors and their affordable housing in Santa Barbara County.

We especially want to give kudos to Bob Nelson in leading this endeavor.

The threat that this greedy company presents to all of the seniors living in SB County is real.

They are a predatory company and threaten our way of live in the senior parks and we commend our supervisors for not bowing to their lawsuit threat.

If they can threaten the county just imagine how their threats to the senior individuals in Del Cielo are coping with them.

If they are successful in some of their threats to the individuals, those seniors will not have anywhere to turn for protection and would lose their homes to these sharks. The statement that these people are wealthy Caucasians is absolutely without merit.

We personally know several of the people living in Del Cielo and their financial circumstances are anything but solid from day to day.

So, once again on behalf of all seniors in MHPs in SB County, we thank you.

Gene and Rita Corbin  
3389 Bent Tree Drive  
Santa Maria, CA 93455  
805-934-0848  
805-598-4152 cell

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** martha hassen <marthahassen2000@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 20, 2024 1:02 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Del Cielo Mobile Home Estates Complaint Filed Nov8, 2024

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Supervisor Laura Capps  
Supervisor Das Williams  
Supervisor Joan Hartmann  
Supervisor Steve Lavagnino  
Supervisor Bob Nelson  
sbcob@countyofsb.org

Supervisors:

Words cannot express the emotion I felt, and still do, when I got the email reporting that Harmony LLC has followed through with their threat to sue Santa Barbara County regarding a zoning overlay of Senior Mobile Home Parks. We urge the Board of Supervisors to refute the accusations of the law suit.

It is obvious that the concerns expressed by Harmony LLC and their attorney are purely financial. It is well known that large corporations, wealth management companies, asset management organizations, both private and public are buying Mobile Home Parks across the nation because they are profitable. Unlike apartment complexes the residents own their units, which relieves the property owner from extensive maintenance. But the most important issue is that unlike apartment residents, the owners of a stationary mobile home cannot take their home with them if the owner of the property raises the rent beyond the their ability to pay.

I heard the comment by the lawyer that the county could provide subsidized funding to seniors to help pay increased rental costs at Del Cielo. The new owner of Del Cielo, a private company, wants the County of Santa Barbara to improve their revenue by paying the increased rental costs that the new owners will impose.

The residents of Senior Mobile Home parks are depending upon the County of Santa Barbara to defend us against the wonton take over of senior parks for financial gain.

We urge the Board of Supervisors to continue the urgency moratorium for the full time that is allowed under the County rules so that all aspects can be examined in the light of public forums to ensure a reliable, secure and unbreakable zone overlay written

Respectfully

Martha Hassenplug, Resident, Rancho Santa Barbara

Cc: Anne Anderson