

October 22, 2019

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Ventura County Board of Supervisors  
800 S. Victoria Avenue, #L1740  
Ventura, CA 93009-1740

**Re: Update of the Ventura County Building Code (Agenda Item 36)**

Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed adoption of the 2019 Ventura county Building Code (Code).

CoLAB supports the County's desire to ensure safety and compliance through updating the 2016 Code. Currently, small (<3,000 square foot) buildings or structures used only for agriculture are exempted from Building and Safety plan review and inspection. Small agricultural buildings include tool storage sheds, single-story barns, and equipment storage structures. These structures are not electrified and do not have plumbing, and are essential for agricultural operations in Ventura County.

The proposed changes to the Code remove this exemption.

According to the County, the proposed changes to the Code will add up to \$3,850 in fees and costs to construct small agricultural structures. These fees are for plan review and inspection. They are also over and above the existing fees and permitting costs already imposed by the County on these structures.

Examples of current fees and costs imposed by the County to permit small agricultural structures (without electricity and plumbing) include:

- Zoning clearance fee
- Permit application requirements:
  - Soils report
  - Structural engineering plans
- County Fire Department permit fees,
- County Environmental Health set back fees, and
- County Environmental Health Floodplain Clearance fees.

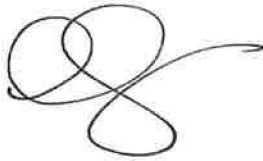
Assuming the County requires basic structural engineering plans and soils reports, a project applicant currently pays approximately \$9,000 in permitting costs alone for small agricultural structures without electricity or plumbing. After adding the proposed Building and Safety plan review and inspection requirements, local ranchers and farmers will pay over

\$13,000 to the County to get the required paperwork to build a small storage shed.

The Board has stated that promoting and improving the economic vitality of Ventura County's agricultural economy is one of the Guiding Principles of the General Plan. But demanding that local farmers and ranchers pay thousands of dollars more in fees and permitting costs does not fulfill the Board's stated intention of creating "policies that support agriculture as an integral business to the County".

CoLAB urges the Board to add language to the proposed Code update that exempts small (<3,000 square foot) agricultural structures from the fees and costs associated with Building and Safety plan review and inspection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a trailing line, representing Louise Lampara.

Louise Lampara  
Senior Program Director