



**MILLER STARR  
REGALIA**

1331 N. California Blvd.  
Suite 600  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

T 925 935 9400  
F 925 933 4126  
www.mslegal.com

Dana Kennedy  
Direct Dial: 925.638.4802  
dana.kennedy@mslegal.com

October 31, 2023

**VIA EMAIL**

Humboldt County Planning Commission  
c/o Kathy Hayes, Humboldt County Clerk of the Board  
825 5th Street, Room 111  
Eureka, CA 95501  
Email: [planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us)

Re: [Proposed Sign Ordinance \(File No. 23-1484, Agenda Item No. 2 for Hearing on November 2, 2023\)](#)

Dear Ms. Hayes:

This firm represents OUTFRONT Media. We reviewed File No. 23-1484, including the draft regulations that would comprehensively update the standards for signs in the zoning ordinance (the "Proposed Signage Regulations"). We understand the Planning Commission will consider the Proposed Signage Regulations as Agenda Item No. 2 at a public hearing scheduled for November 2, 2023.

The Proposed Signage Regulations conflict with state law in several important respects, each of which is outlined briefly below. As a result, we urge you to carefully consider and revise the draft before it moves forward. Please understand that we are tracking this legislation closely, and we are prepared to take legal action if you proceed with regulations that would interfere with our client's state-protected property rights.

**The Proposed Signage Regulations Must Appropriately Account for Legal Nonconforming Billboards.**

As a general matter, the Proposed Signage Regulations do not contemplate the many billboards in Humboldt County that were lawfully erected before the Outdoor Advertising Act was enacted. These long-standing signs are legal nonconforming and protected by the Outdoor Advertising Act's compensation requirements to the same extent as signs later erected subject to an Outdoor Advertising Display Permit.

For example, the Proposed Signage Regulations purports to empower the County to require removal of an existing billboard without "an active and compliant Outdoor Advertising Act Permit." This language – and any effort by the County to enforce the same – is contrary to Section 5412 of the California Business and Professions Code,

which established a general rule that a local agency cannot compel removal of advertising displays without payment of just compensation to the owner of the display and the owner of the land where it is located. Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code Sec. 5412. This is true of all “lawfully erected” displays, “anywhere within the state,” without reference to an active permit.

**The County Must Pay Just Compensation for Any Forced Removal or Maintenance Limitation on Existing Displays.**

The Outdoor Advertising Act is unambiguous: Subject to limited exceptions, “no advertising display which was lawfully erected anywhere in the state shall be compelled to be removed, nor shall its customary maintenance or use be limited...without payment of compensation, as defined in the Eminent Domain Law.” Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code Sec. 5412.

The Proposed Signage Regulations violate this rule in several ways:

- There is no mechanism for the just compensation to sign owners and property owners mandated by state law and anticipated by the County’s own General Plan.
- Maintenance would be strictly limited by introducing requirements that owners first seek Zoning Clearance Certificates and Special Permits. This introduces additional expense, lead time, and most importantly, uncertainty – each of which would individually constitute a proscribed limit on owners’ state-granted right to maintain existing signs.
- Restabilization of existing signs would “not be permitted,” under the draft regulations, creating yet another unlawful limit on the maintenance of existing displays.

If the County wishes to proceed with some version of these controls, it must build in clear definitions for each activity and provide explicit mechanisms for the land owner and sign owner to both receive just compensation every single time the County compels removal of a lawfully erected sign or limits their ability to maintain an existing sign.

As you may be aware, Division 6 of Title 4 of the California Code of Regulations was adopted to “implement, interpret, make specific, and otherwise carry out the provisions of the California Outdoor Advertising Act, Business and Professions Code Sections 5200, et seq.” This division includes a specific definition of “customary maintenance,” with related activities allowed for the duration of a display’s “normal life.” Cal. Code Regs. Sec. 2270. Therefore, nothing in the final version of the Proposed Signage Regulations can purport to limit a sign owner’s ability to perform activities in furtherance of customary display maintenance.

As an aside, please note that I wrote to the County this past spring and specifically asked to be kept apprised of Proposed Signage Regulations as the legislation proceeded. I never received a response to my letter and was not notified by the

County of the November 2 hearing. Further, I am aware of several public comments shared with John Ford, Director of Planning and Building, and Jacob Dunn, Associate Planner that were not included in the Commissioners' materials for the November 2 hearing. I sincerely hope that the substance of all public comments received to date will be shared with decisionmakers before the County proceeds in a manner that is contrary to state law.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Very truly yours,

MILLER STARR REGALIA

*Dana Kennedy*

Dana Kennedy

DCK:kli

cc: Commissioner Iver Skavdal (skavdalz11@gmail.com)  
Commissioner Thomas Mulder (hrh707@outlook.com)  
Commissioner Noah Levy (noah@landwaterconsulting.com)  
Commissioner Lonyx Landry (lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu)  
Commissioner Peggy O'Neill (Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com)  
Commissioner Brian Mitchell (mrbrian707@gmail.com)  
Commissioner Sarah West (srhawest@gmail.com)  
Jeff McCuen, OUTFRONT Media  
Anthony Leones, Miller Starr Regalia

**From:** [Caroline Griffith](#)  
**To:** [Planning Clerk](#); [skavdalz11@gmail.com](mailto:skavdalz11@gmail.com); [hrh707@outlook.com](mailto:hrh707@outlook.com); [noah@landwaterconsulting.com](mailto:noah@landwaterconsulting.com); [lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](mailto:lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu); [Peggyoneil1953@gmail.com](mailto:Peggyoneil1953@gmail.com); [mrbrian707@gmail.com](mailto:mrbrian707@gmail.com); [srhawest@gmail.com](mailto:srhawest@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Comment on agenda item F.1., draft sign ordinance  
**Date:** Thursday, October 19, 2023 12:56:24 PM

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**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft ordinance.

I'm writing on behalf of the Northcoast Environmental Center which was founded in 1971 with the mission to promote understanding of the relations between people and the biosphere and to conserve, protect, and celebrate terrestrial, aquatic, and marine ecosystems of northern California and southern Oregon.

We are thankful to County staff for taking the time to gather public input and draft the ordinance before you. We are especially pleased with the prohibitions on digital signs for a number of reasons: they are a distraction which can pose a danger to vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists; artificial light at night impacts the natural cycles (mating, migration patterns, hunting and predation) of wildlife; and their use of energy, especially during the day when wattage often has to be increased to remain visible in daylight. We also appreciate the inclusion of efforts to protect wetlands and sensitive natural areas during maintenance operations.

We have a few suggestions below for how the ordinance could be strengthened.

Regarding illumination, we would like to see section 87.2.8.1 strengthened to meet the standards of the Dark Sky Society policies for protecting the night sky, specifically by adding a definition of how brightly signs can be lit. The City of Eureka adopted these policies when updating its sign ordinance last year before the California Coastal Commission and the full text can be found at

<https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2022/7/W11a/w11a-7-2022-appendix.pdf>.

Page 27 states:

**Brightness:**

- During daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance is limited to 10,000 nits.
- At all other times, luminance is limited to 500 nits.
- Each sign must have a light sensing device that will automatically adjust the brightness of the display as the natural ambient light conditions change.

We also think that the section on removing existing billboards could be clarified.

Section 87.2.7.7 states "The County may declare its intent to require removal of an

existing billboard by providing the existing billboard owner notice of such intent a minimum of seven (7) years prior to actual removal of the sign.” We support the idea of the County being able to buy out billboards, but this appears to leave it up to the County’s discretion which billboards would be slated for removal by not giving clear guidelines of what would trigger removal. We would like to see a phase-out of all signs that do not conform to regulations, similar to the language that was in a previous draft that was circulated which stated “Off-premise signs not consistent with the above regulations shall be removed within 15 years from the effective date of this ordinance.”

Thank you,

--  
**Caroline Griffith (she/they)**

**Executive Director and EcoNews Editor**

*The Northcoast Environmental Center sits in Goudi'ni, part of the unceded ancestral land of the Wiyot peoples. We strive to follow the example of the Indigenous peoples of the north coast who continue to steward this land as they have done since time immemorial. We pledge to listen to, learn from, respect, and include the voices of Indigenous peoples in our work advocating for the wellbeing of this land and the people who call it home. Join us in acknowledging and respecting the sovereignty of the Wiyot Tribe by participating in the [Wiyot Honor Tax](#), or supporting the tribe upon whose land you reside.*

**Northcoast Environmental Center**

**PO Box 4259**

**Arcata, CA 95518**

**541-415-4756**

**[www.yournec.org](http://www.yournec.org)**

**[director@yournec.org](mailto:director@yournec.org)**

**From:** [Visual Concepts](#)  
**To:** [Geoff W](#)  
**Cc:** [Jeff Mccuen](#); [Rob M Shilling](#); [Dunn, Jacob](#); [Ford, John](#); [Bohn, Rex](#); [Bushnell, Michelle](#); [Jeff Slack](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Updated Draft Sign Ordinance  
**Date:** Monday, October 23, 2023 11:50:07 AM

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**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Thanks for including me, Geoff. I do not own or service billboards in our community, but am often involved in various signage projects. I also employ 9 people locally. Many of our clients, other small, independent businesses, have been forced to leave Humboldt in the last few years. Piles of red tape like this make success for an independent business in our county next to impossible. High taxes and insurance rates mean I struggle to pay my employees what I consider to be a living wage.

As with Geoff's employees, homeownership in our community is next to impossible. I do all that I can for my crew, but I often am kept up at night knowing that their hard work, dedication and skill set seems to be not as important or valued in our community as it should be. Geoff's language is strong of course, but his position that the drug addicts and vagrants in our town are given priority and many more tools to try to improve their lot in life than hard working people supporting their families and going to work everyday rings true to me. We place so much energy, money and time to block businesses simply being able to survive locally.

I've been in business for 16 years locally. I've been sent endless invoices from the state and county. Been subject to ridiculous inspections, penalties, and red tape. No one, not one person or government entity has ever stopped by to make their support known. No one has ever offered tools, resources, or even a pat on the back or appreciation for folks like us who are working tirelessly to keep our local economy going. If we can't begin to make Humboldt a place that attracts business, or simply allows it to exist, we'll see the continued degradation of our community, streets and buildings. Even more shuttered storefronts where no one can afford to do business, a greater number of down-and-out people wandering the streets.

Contrary to what you may think, Geoff and I both consider ourselves to be environmentalists. That's a big part of the reason we choose to live here. However, we must find a balance where businesses are allowed to conduct operations without constantly being hassled or trying to work with one hand tied behind our backs. We both love Humboldt, and this is our home. It's just disheartening when more hassles like this are constantly the norm, and no one at all seems to be looking out for us small businesses. We preach about supporting local in our area, we say we value our locally owned businesses, but I fear a time soon when the only jobs left in Humboldt will be those provided by the government, or major corporations.

My rant here doesn't specifically speak to the ordinance Geoff is referring to, but it's just more of the same issues for me. From manufacturing, agriculture, retail, we're all suffering, and we could really use some help. the boot has to be lifted from the neck of local folks and the businesses they operate or the future of our beloved area may be in jeopardy. Thanks for hearing me out. Geoff, if I can help or be an ally in any way, please reach out. We're in this together, fighting for the opportunity to simply exist for ourselves, our families, our employees, and our community.

On Mon, Oct 23, 2023 at 10:45 AM Geoff W <[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)> wrote:

John/ Jacob-

I am a little caught off guard by the new updated sign ordinance. I also requested to see the new ordinance when you were done and you both said you'd make sure I was given it, instead I was forwarded it by another local business owner whose concerned with the counties attack on my business. I'm pretty bummed on that and it kinda feels on purpose with these changes.

How did the off-premise signs(billboards) section change so much? There was no language around limiting maintenance of billboards in the prior draft sign ordinance and there was absolutely no discussing such language in the focus groups meeting about the sign ordinance. When and how did these sections get added? It's very obvious what the county is doing in adding sections 87.3.3.5.3-.6. to the sign ordinance. The county is adding red tape via permit requirements to maintenance activities in an effort to prevent maintenance from occurring.

Section 87.3.3.5.6 is just an extra stab in the back given the areas billboards are in, the tweaker population that lives beneath them, and often the reason for our maintenance activities. It is an everyday occurrence that our billboards and property which they reside on are the victim of trespassing and other crimes from homeless tweakers, our boards are graffitied and vandalized by these vagrants and the county wants to, by ordinance, declare your tax paying and contributing members of our community the "public nuisance" when we repair our damaged property.

Section 87.3.3.5.2 if factually incorrect. Billboards are currently legal in the county code and have been forever, example billboards on central ave in Mckinerville and Myrtle Ave, outside Eureka city limits, are legally permitted structures. They are not within 660' of a Caltrans ROW therefore they do not require an ODA permit. Them not having an ODA permit does not deem them to not be billboards and is not grounds for their removal.

This all begs the questions of what is the county doing? Why is it trying to run business out of our area, why is it trying to put one of its local business and it's 7 employees out of business? I pay my employees \$25-32/hr, give them health and other benefits. That's 3x federal minimum wage and guess what, none of them can afford a house! A mortgage on the average house in Humboldt is \$4,200/month. I understand we do need new sign ordinances but maybe instead of fighting signs, billboards, and jobs you could draft some quick ordinances that help the working members of your community afford to live in your community instead of making it harder.

Jeff M/Rob- Here is the link to the new sign ordinance, please have your attorney draft a response asap.

<https://humboldt.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12370683&GUID=19D8F0FD-6A42-4063-A5ED-374C3CCAB88C>

Geoff Wills  
Cell 714-655-0763

Office 707-442-7781  
3408 Jacobs Ave Eureka, Ca 95501  
[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)

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Visual Concepts  
[VisualConcepts707.com](http://VisualConcepts707.com)  
707.633.5087  
820 N St.  
Arcata, Ca 95521



November 1, 2023

VIA EMAIL ([planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us))

ORIGINAL BY FIRST CLASS MAIL

Humboldt County Planning Commission  
c/o Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the board  
825 5th Street, Room 111  
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: *Proposed Sign Ordinance Related to Section 87.3 of Chapter 3 and Section 87.2 of Chapter 4 of Division 1 of Title III of Humboldt County Code*

Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Planning Commission,

This office represents Lamar Central Outdoor, LLC (“Lamar”) with respect to the billboards located in the County of Humboldt (“County”). Lamar is a national outdoor advertising company that was founded in 1902. Lamar provides outdoor advertising opportunities on billboards (including both static and digital billboards) with over 200 plants throughout the country. Lamar currently owns and operates three billboards within the County’s jurisdiction.

Lamar is presenting this letter to provide feedback and objections on the Proposed Sign Ordinance amending Section 87.3 of Chapter 3 and Section 87.2 of Chapter 4 of Division 1 of Title III of Humboldt County Code (“Proposed Ordinance”), which will be considered at a public hearing on November 2, 2023. We recognize that there is similar language in both Section 87.2 and 87.3, but will only address one section, as to not duplicate efforts. That said, to the extent that there is similar or duplicative language in both sections, the feedback or objections applies to both sections.

**Section 87.2.7 of the Proposed Ordinance appears to run afoul of Business and Professions Codes 5412 et seq., which allows nonconforming billboards to remain in place.**

State law recognizes the legal nonconforming use status of billboards and requires local agencies to honor such amortization periods of legal nonconforming billboards. State law further distinguishes the method of amortizing nonconforming billboards. Although proposed Section 87.2.7.7 attempts to recognize such amortization periods, it gravely falls short of the requirements and distinctions required by State law. The Proposed Ordinance 1) does not distinguish billboards located in different zones, as so contemplated in B&P Sections 5412 through 5412.4. Instead, the Proposed Ordinance blanketly applies a general and arbitrary amortization period to existing and legal billboards. Further, of note, proposed Section 87.2.7.1 is vague, ambiguous and illogical. Section 87.2.7.1 appears to be an attempt to define an “existing billboard” but is non-sensical as written.

**The Proposed Ordinance favors forced removal of billboards, which such forced removal violates State law and is considered an unlawful taking.**

In addition to requiring a proper amortization period, State law requires agencies who force removal of billboards to pay just compensation for the taking of private property. (Business and Professions Code Section 5412 et seq.) Again, the Proposed Ordinance does not provide any proper mechanism or statutory scheme to allow legal nonconforming billboards, and further does not mention that forced removal requires the payment of just compensation. In particular, existing billboards located within the County must be considered legal nonconforming uses; if not, such removal is considered a taking. Lamar is vehemently against the proposed language Section 87.2.7.7, as it places a woefully undervalue of Lamar's billboards. Adoption and enforcement of the Proposed Ordinance would merely reallocate highly valued property to lower valued use, seizing Lamar's property and business.

Under circumstances forcing the removal of a billboard, the County must in fact pay just compensation, not only to the billboard owner, but also to the underlying landowner who receives lease revenue for the billboard. Based on the readily recognized income method of valuation, Lamar's billboards in the County are valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. An arbitrary amortization scheme for sign removal has nothing to do with the fair market value nor does it constitute just compensation.

**The Proposed Ordinance prohibits the general maintenance of billboards, violating California Code of Regulations Section 2270 and encouraging public nuisances.**

Section 2270 of Title 4 of the California Code of Regulations allows for the customary maintenance of existing billboards for the duration of their normal life. Customary maintenance includes several items, including changing the advertising message, adding an extension to an outside dimension of a display as incident to the copy for a temporary period of three years, and adding a light box. The Proposed Ordinance runs afoul of this regulation and instead attempts to outlaw the maintenance of a billboard, except in situations requiring a Zoning Clearance Certificate. Nowhere in the Proposed Ordinance does it provide what is needed to obtain a Zoning Clearance Certificate, nor does it provide that the maintenance of billboards may occur without a Zoning Clearance Certificate so long as the maintenance falls within the regulations of State law.

Instead, the Proposed Ordinance seems to discourage routine maintenance and encourage dilapidation and the creation of nuisances.

**Conclusion**

Lamar encourages the denial of the Proposed Ordinance on the basis that it violates State law and public policy. Such a Proposed Ordinance would further harm the County's competitive and thriving business community by thwarting advertising options. Advertising on billboards has been proven to be a cost-effective means to encourage business. Any effort by the County to stop such advertising would make it more difficult for local businesses to

thrive. Billboards fulfill part of the overall economic success of a business and should remain in the County with reasonable regulations. It would further run afoul of the policy of the State of California, which is to “encourage local entities and display owners to enter into relocation agreements which allow local entities to continue development in a planned manner without the expenditure of public funds while allowing the continued maintenance of private investment and a medium of public communication.” Cal. B&P Codes section 5412.

Lamar has been a long-standing business in the community for decades and continues to invest in the County. Lamar prides itself on being a good neighbor and a long-time stakeholder in the community. That said, just like with any business, the County cannot legally “take” Lamar’s property and business without just compensation. Efforts by the County to remove legal nonconforming signs without proper payment will result in the County exposing itself to a claim for inverse condemnation which, in addition to entitling the owners of the property to just compensation, will also expose the County to payment of the owners’ attorney’s fees under Cal. Civ. Proc. Code section 1036.

Accordingly, Lamar would ask the County to deny the Proposed Ordinance, and instead work with Lamar to upgrade its billboards and beautify the County.

Very truly yours,



Theodore K. Stream, of  
STREAM KIM HICKS  
WRAGE & ALFARO, PC

TKS:jm

cc: Client

Commissioner Iver Skavdal ([skavdalz11@gmail.com](mailto:skavdalz11@gmail.com))  
Commissioner Thomas Mulder ([hrh707@outlook.com](mailto:hrh707@outlook.com))  
Commissioner Noah Levy ([noah@landwaterconsulting.com](mailto:noah@landwaterconsulting.com))  
Commissioner Lonyx Landry ([lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](mailto:lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu))  
Commissioner Peggy O’Neill ([peggyoneill1953@gmail.com](mailto:peggyoneill1953@gmail.com))  
Commissioner Brian Mitchell ([mrbbrian707@gmail.com](mailto:mrbbrian707@gmail.com))  
Commissioner Sarah West ([srhawest@gmail.com](mailto:srhawest@gmail.com))



Oct. 18, 2023

Humboldt County Planning Commissioners  
Sent via email to [Planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:Planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us)

Re: Draft Sign Ordinance

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of Humboldt Waterkeeper, which was launched in 2004 with a mission to safeguard coastal resources for the health, enjoyment, and economic strength of the Humboldt Bay community through education, scientific research, and enforcement of laws to fight pollution.

We have advocated for many years for better regulation of off-site billboards, digital signs, and lighting, particularly in unincorporated areas of the County in close proximity to Humboldt Bay, Elk River, and other coastal areas. We are thrilled to see that the policies, standards, and implementation measures adopted in the 2017 General Plan to protect our scenic views, night skies, sensitive habitats, and scenic areas from signage for advertising and other commercial uses of public spaces will finally be enacted by County ordinance. In particular, we support the prohibition on new digital and off-premise signs, protections for wetlands and other sensitive habitats during maintenance related to existing signs, and lighting requirements to protect the night sky for stargazers, people trying to sleep, and migrating birds, bats and other wildlife.

The lighting standards in the draft ordinance are weak and we recommend strengthening them, particularly in the Coastal Ordinance. After Planning Commission deliberation at numerous General Plan Update hearings, it became clear that the Dark Sky Society policies for protecting the night sky were wildly popular, gaining strong support from Commissioners Dennis Mayo, Ralph Faust, and everyone in between them, spanning the political spectrum.



600 F Street, Suite 3 #810  
Arcata, CA 95521  
(707) 499-3678  
[www.humboldtwaterkeeper.org](http://www.humboldtwaterkeeper.org)



We strongly recommend that the County consider the policies adopted by the City of Eureka and approved by the Coastal Commission. Below is an excerpt of the City's sign ordinance, LCP-1-EUR-20-0072-2 that was approved by the Coastal Commission last year (the complete language is available at <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2022/7/w11a/w11a-7-2022-exhibits.pdf>):

**Brightness (p. 27):**

- During daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance is limited to 10,000 nits. At all other times, luminance is limited to 500 nits.
- Digital signs may produce no more than 0.3 foot-candle of light when measured from the distance using the following formula: Each sign must have a light sensing device that will automatically adjust the brightness of the display as the natural ambient light conditions change.

This language is more specific, enforceable, and protective than what is in the draft County Ordinance before you at 87.3.3.7.1.6: "Lighting shall use the **lowest light level necessary** and **when feasible** lighting should be on demand or shall only operate between sunrise and sunset or 30 minutes after closing, whichever comes first."

**Illumination (p. 31):**

The light source for externally illuminated signs must be positioned so that light does not shine directly on adjoining properties, and for signs located in the Coastal Zone, any environmentally sensitive habitat area or wetlands.


This language is again more specific, enforceable, and protective than what is in the draft County Ordinance before you at 87.3.3.7.1.5 "The light source for externally illuminated signs must be shielded and positioned so that light is only directed at the face of the sign and does not spill beyond where it is needed."

We also support the seven-year buyout period for phasing out billboards on a case-by-case basis to be determined by the County, but would much prefer to see the phase-out of all billboards that are not consistent with the new regulations, as was proposed in the draft ordinance we reviewed back in June, which said in part,

87.2.7.7 Off-premise signs not consistent with the above regulations shall be removed within 15 years from the effective date of this ordinance. Upon the expiration of the designated time period, the permit holder shall be required to remove the off-premise sign structure and restore the site to its original condition within 30 days...

Thank you for your consideration. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Kalt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jennifer Kalt, Executive Director  
[jkalt@humboldtwaterkeeper.org](mailto:jkalt@humboldtwaterkeeper.org)

**From:** [Jess O](#)  
**To:** [Planning Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** sick of billboards!  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 8:53:05 AM

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Dear planning clerk,

As an Arcata resident since 1987, I'm glad to see the lack of billboards blocking the beautiful Humboldt Bay.

Now it's time to get rid of the rest of them!

Please vote to remove the current billboards, block digital billboards, buyout the existing ones and please don't allow their lights to screw up our view of the night sky.

If you want billboards go to LA or the Bay area where EVERYWHERE is polluted with ugly billboards. Humboldt is better off without them.

Thanks so much for listening!

Sincerley,

JEss O'Brien  
Arcata, CA

**McClenagan, Laura**

---

**Subject:** FW: Billboard feedback

-----Original Message-----

From: Julie Fulkerson <juliefulkerson@mac.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 7:58 AM

To: COB <COB@co.humboldt.ca.us>

Subject: Billboard feedback

Caution: This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Hardworking Planning Commissioners!

Please do everything you can to restrict, limit, reduce, eliminate bill boards from our extraordinary Redwood, Wild River, Humboldt Bay, Pacific Ocean and Rich Agricultural lands.

The blight damages impressions of first time visitors and have little value to local drivers...if anything, they are a safety hazard.

Thank you so much,

Julie Fulkerson

2614 L Street

Eureka

but formerly of Trinidad and Arcata.

I know the backroads to avoid billboard blight, but not everyone does.



**McClenagan, Laura**

---

**Subject:** draft billboard ordinance

**From:** Mary Gearheart <[msgheart@gmail.com](mailto:msgheart@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 4:19 PM

**To:** COB <[COB@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:COB@co.humboldt.ca.us)>

**Subject:** draft billboard ordinance

**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

I served on the county planning commission for 19 years because I thought it was important to get an updated General Plan that reflects the values of the majority of today's Humboldt County residents. Of all the discussions we had over the years, the one on the urgency and importance of a strong billboard ordinance that would protect the natural scenic beauty and sensitive habitat areas of our County stands out in my memory. Even though we as a commission very seldom had a unanimous vote on most items, when the discussion came up to protect Coastal Scenic View areas, wetlands and riparian areas from billboards, the vote was unanimous. I think the ordinance should also certainly prohibit all digital billboards, have sufficient lighting requirements and include phase-out of all existing billboards that do not meet the new ordinance regulations. Thank you for your time and consideration of these points. A strong billboard and sign ordinance is long overdue. Mary Gearheart

--

**McClenagan, Laura**

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**Subject:** Proposed Sign Ordinance hearing Oct 19

**From:** Michele McKeegan <[mikeymcke@gmail.com](mailto:mikeymcke@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 4:08 PM

**To:** COB <[COB@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:COB@co.humboldt.ca.us)>

**Subject:** Proposed Sign Ordinance hearing Oct 19

**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

To the Planning Commission:

As head of Keep Eureka Beautiful, I want to urge you to take this opportunity to create a billboard ordinance with real teeth

Surveys show that an overwhelming majority of Americans feel that billboards are not just intrusive but off putting. Historically some in the business community have seen them as good marketing tools but with more and more Americans relying on Google searches to find whatever they are looking for, even this rationale shrivels,

Humboldt County has some of the loveliest scenery in the state and the presence of billboards mar this natural beauty just as they contribute to the ugly jumble of signs in our cities. They have no good role to play.

Thank you for considering this and thank you for your service to our County,

Michele McKeegan

**From:** [Richard Salzman](#)  
**To:** [Planning Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Hayes, Kathy](#)  
**Subject:** Billboards  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:42:59 PM

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**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Dear Planning Department,

Thank you for considering our view-sheds, our night sky, and the safety of us all by putting these common sense restrictions on the billboards that pollute our highways and distract already distracted drivers.

Thank you!!

----

Richard Salzman  
1751 Charles Ave  
Arcata CA 95521  
+1.707.822.5500 /voice  
+1.707.845.3700 /text  
+1.707.825.6600/fax

[richard.w.salzman@gmail.com](mailto:richard.w.salzman@gmail.com)

[RichardSalzman.com](http://RichardSalzman.com)

**From:** [Sam](#)  
**To:** [Planning Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Billboards Ordinance Comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023 7:45:46 PM

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**Caution:** This email was sent from an EXTERNAL source. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments.

Dear Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission,  
I support the removal of all billboards on the 101 Corridor between Eureka and Arcata and the policy to phase out existing billboards in wetlands in Humboldt by buying out the leases and to prohibit all billboards in the wetlands and along the entire Humboldt Bay viewshed and north of Arcata along 101 at the Arcata bottoms. The value of an on spoiled natural view shed is far higher than advertising revenues, and will continue to make this area a gem destinations for visitors. When we have so much incredible natural beauty to share that Is the main thing that brings people here, We need a long-term plan to protect the natural beauty here and billboards do just not fit into this plan. Some of our most beautiful views that tourists will want to take pictures of to send around the world can have unsightly billboards ruining the whole thing And making a terrible statement about our concern for the environment. Thank you , Sam Neuwirth resident of Bayside since 1981.

## Draft Sign Ordinance Webinar 6.29.23

- Jen Kalt:
  - The language in 87.2.7.5 regarding the public agency jurisdiction or expressly authorized by such public agency
  - Signage needs to be directly related to public agency
  - Off premise billboards should be restricted to 300 square feet based on general plan standards
  - Has issue with mapped sensitive habitat areas (need to be updated)
  - Could 87.2.8.1.5 consider being stronger or have time requirement, or follow dark sky initiative
  - Also is 50 feet enough?
  - IM5 for lighting on signs
  - Possibly strengthen coastal scenic designation in LCP's
- Caroline Griffith
  - Scenic highway designation and how will that impact the approval of new off-premise signs

## Draft Sign Ordinance Webinar 7.6.23

- Geoff Wills:
  - 6 foot req on property sale sign seems small, and 15 sq ft for commercial property sale signs should be increased (4x8)
  - Many commercial properties have signage that goes over aggregate
  - Quantity on appurtenance table should be 2 instead of 1 and sizes should be updated
  - Eureka natural foods has a 90 sq ft monument sign
  - There shouldn't be any regulation on letter height because that would be regulating content
  - Standard sign sheet is 4x8 and should be the maximum
  - Wall signs should be limited by square footage and not quantity
  - Monument signs should be more lenient since they are nicer than pole signs
  - Short sighted to ban digital signs, because this helps local businesses explain who they are and what they offer, there should at least be a permit pathway
  - Special permit fees are excessive, what is the price? \$1400 w/ out hearing and \$3200 w/ hearing
    - Should discuss permit costs with City of Eureka
- Larry Doss
  - 32 sq ft is customary size for for sale signs, like farm stands and commercial businesses

- For sale signs may be too small
- Sq ft should not be included for directional signs that a business may utilize
- Sign Distance to residential neighborhoods is too restrictive and should be okay to have a digital sign
- Maybe allow digital signs on busy streets or highways, this is safer for employees that may need to use ladders to change and is simpler for business owners to change
- Does not like the ban on roof signs
- Alissa Woods
  - Agrees with everything Geoff and Larry said

**From:** [Ford, John](#)  
**To:** [Geoff W](#); [skavdalz11@gmail.com](#); [hrh707@outlook.com](#); [lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](#); [Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com](#); [srhawest@gmail.com](#); [Planning Clerk](#)  
**Cc:** [Brian Mitchell](#); [Noah Levy](#); [Dunn, Jacob](#); [Jeff Mccuen](#); [Jason Ripp](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Sign Ordinance meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 08, 2023 2:45:11 PM

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Hi Geoff:

The Planning and Building Department does not set up meetings with specific stakeholders to discuss items with Planning Commissioners unless a field trip or workshop is being scheduled. You have copied all the commissioners, and it is up to them whether they choose to meet with you.

I do want to caution that scheduling these types of meetings walk a fine line in maintaining the integrity of a public process. The County public hearing process is subject to a public meeting law known as the Brown Act which regulates what is appropriate both outside and within the public meeting. The commissioners will need to disclose all that is discussed at these meetings so the public will understand how these meetings may have shaped their thoughts on the issues discussed.

I hope this helps.

John

John H. Ford  
Director of Planning and Building  
(707) 268-3738

-----Original Message-----

From: Geoff W <[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:50 PM  
To: [skavdalz11@gmail.com](mailto:skavdalz11@gmail.com); [hrh707@outlook.com](mailto:hrh707@outlook.com); [lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](mailto:lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu); [Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com](mailto:Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com); [srhawest@gmail.com](mailto:srhawest@gmail.com); [Planning Clerk <planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us>](mailto:planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
Cc: [Brian Mitchell <mrbrian707@gmail.com>](mailto:mrbrian707@gmail.com); [Noah Levy <noah@landwaterconsulting.com>](mailto:noah@landwaterconsulting.com); Ford, John <[JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us)>; [Dunn, Jacob <jdunn@co.humboldt.ca.us>](mailto:jdunn@co.humboldt.ca.us); [Jeff Mccuen <jeff.mccuen@outfront.com>](mailto:jeff.mccuen@outfront.com); [Jason Ripp <jripp@lamar.com>](mailto:jripp@lamar.com)  
Subject: Sign Ordinance meeting

Noah/Brian-

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me just now about our proposed new sign ordinance and for our discussion on ways to correctly craft a working sign ordinance for our county.

Planning clerk and other planners, I would really appreciate an opportunity to meet with the rest of the committee members at my office to have the same discussion Noah, Brian and myself just had. In an effort to conserve my time on this important project I'd appreciate it if we can arrange these meeting with 3 and then 2 commissioners. I can make myself available almost anytime this week or next week, please let me know the best way to schedule these meetings.

Thanks!

Geoff Wills  
Cell 714-655-0763  
Office 707-442-7781  
3408 Jacobs Ave Eureka, Ca 95501

[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)



**From:** [Geoff W](#)  
**To:** [Ford, John](#)  
**Cc:** [skavdalz11@gmail.com](#); [hrh707@outlook.com](#); [lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](#); [Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com](#); [srhawest@gmail.com](#); [Planning Clerk](#); [Brian Mitchell](#); [Noah Levy](#); [Dunn, Jacob](#); [Jeff Mccuen](#); [Jason Ripp](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Sign Ordinance meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 08, 2023 4:36:16 PM

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Thanks John, I'm aware of the Brown act and that is why I am limiting these meeting to less than 3 at a time. IMO this should be scheduled as a workshop where I can meet with all them at once.

My takeaway from my meeting with Noah and Brian was that we all agreed this sign code is not ready to move forward and getting a setting where I could work with Jacob to present a powerpoint to all the commissioners was an idea we tossed around. Noah/Brian please confirm if you think this would be the best approach to efficiently move this along.

I am open to other suggestions on how to proceed. Let me know, thanks!

> On Nov 8, 2023, at 2:45 PM, Ford, John <[JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us)> wrote:

>

> Hi Geoff:

>

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>

> I hope this helps.

>

> John

>

> John H. Ford

> Director of Planning and Building

> (707) 268-3738

>

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Geoff W <[geoffwills33@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffwills33@yahoo.com)>

> Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:50 PM

> To: [skavdalz11@gmail.com](#); [hrh707@outlook.com](#); [lonyx.landry@humboldt.edu](#); [Peggyoneill1953@gmail.com](#); [srhawest@gmail.com](#); [Planning Clerk](#) <[planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:planningclerk@co.humboldt.ca.us)>

> Cc: [Brian Mitchell](#) <[mrbrian707@gmail.com](mailto:mrbrian707@gmail.com)>; [Noah Levy](#) <[noah@landwaterconsulting.com](mailto:noah@landwaterconsulting.com)>; [Ford, John](#) <[JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:JFord@co.humboldt.ca.us)>; [Dunn, Jacob](#) <[jdunn@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:jdunn@co.humboldt.ca.us)>; [Jeff Mccuen](#) <[jeff.mccuen@outfront.com](mailto:jeff.mccuen@outfront.com)>; [Jason Ripp](#) <[jripp@lamar.com](mailto:jripp@lamar.com)>

> Subject: Sign Ordinance meeting

>

> Noah/Brian-

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>

> Geoff Wills

> Cell 714-655-0763

> Office 707-442-7781

> 3408 Jacobs Ave Eureka, Ca 95501

> geoffwills33@yahoo.com

>