

Title and Summary
(356 word summary)

Humboldt County People’s Forestry Ordinance Recommending Rules for Humboldt County Prohibiting Clearcutting and Other Forest Practices for Adoption by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

State law gives exclusive authority to regulate the conduct of almost all timber operations to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (“BOF”). (Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973, Public Resources Code § 4511, et seq. § 4516 (d)), especially on land zoned Timberland Production Zone (TPZ). (Government Code § 51115). According to the Department of Planning and Building approximately 48% of the land area of Humboldt County is zoned TPZ. The BOF regulations are known as the Forest Practice Rules (14 Code of California Regulations (CCR) § 895, et seq.) The Forest Practice Rules apply to timberland, regardless of zoning. The Forest Practice Act allows a county to recommend that the BOF adopt rules applicable only in that particular county to accommodate local needs. (Public Resources Code § 4516.5 (a).)

If enacted, the proposed ordinance would recommend that the BOF adopt rules and regulations for Humboldt County that would prohibit clearcutting and other even-aged forest management methods. The ordinance would also establish more stringent technical standards that would apply to the other methods that would still be allowed. More rigorous stocking standards would be imposed than those currently in effect. Large trees, snags, wildlife trees, and hardwood trees in the area to be logged would have to be retained. The use of heavy machinery on slopes over 40% would be prohibited. Tractor and skid trails on slopes greater than 20% would be required to be covered with slash or mulch during the winter period. Skid trails, landings and work areas must be reseeded, mulched or protected by compacting slash and debris from the harvest operation. A qualified technical expert would, on request, be permitted to accompany a county representative on any field review to be conducted prior to approval of a timber harvest plan.

If approved by the voters, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors would recommend rules consistent with the initiative ordinance to the BOF for adoption. The special rules for Humboldt County would not take effect unless and until they are adopted by the BOF and approved by the Office of Administrative Law, and for a period at least 30 days thereafter.

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