



# Mendocino County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 24-0290, **Version:** 1

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**To: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**From:** Supervisor Williams

**Meeting Date:** March 12, 2024

**Department Contact:** Supervisor Williams

**Phone:** 707-463-4441

**Item Type:** Regular Agenda

**Time Allocated for Item:** 30 Minutes

**Agenda Title:**

Discussion and Possible Action Including Direction to Executive Office Staff to Return with a Plan to Make Most Business Licenses Optional, and Clarify that a Residence Without Customers or Employees is Exempt from Review by Planning and Building Required by MCC Section 6.04.080(a)  
(Sponsor: Supervisor Williams)

**Recommended Action/Motion:**

Direct Executive Office staff to return with a plan to make most business licenses optional, and clarify that a residence without customers or employees is exempt from review by Planning and Building required by MCC section 6.04.080(a).

**Previous Board/Board Committee Actions:**

Previously introduced January 7, 2019. Current board, in open session discuss, asked me to bring it back for consideration.

**Summary of Request:**

Administration of business licenses likely operates at a loss. To champion a culture of people working and to fulfill our pledge to make Mendocino County a small business friendly environment, we should adopt a rebuttable presumption that businesses are operating legally. Annual registration, fees and plan checks impede small business. Except circumstances where local businesses benefit from documentation of a business license, the requirement should be deprecated. Unnecessary government intrusion is a detriment to our local economy. The opportunity cost of an obstructive licensing process is businesses opening elsewhere or not at all, resulting in lost tax revenue in unincorporated areas, which directly impacts the county budget.

Sonoma, Napa and Lake Counties do not require a business license in unincorporated areas. Humboldt County only requires a Storefront Business License for any nonresidential or commercial space where a business operates in unincorporated areas of the county.

Sonoma County requires businesses operating in unincorporated areas to have fictitious business name statements filed with the County Clerk's office unless their business is named after a surname like "Johnson's Construction" or "Garcia's Consulting". If a business needs a "license" for a particular state permit or bank, they have an official letter that validates that there is not an official business license in the County of Sonoma.

**Alternative Action/Motion:**

Status quo, continue to impede economic activity.

**Strategic Plan Priority Designation:** An Effective County Government

**Supervisory District:** All

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supplemental Information Available Online At:** N/A

**Fiscal Details:**

**source of funding:** Savings

**current f/y cost:** Unknown

**budget clarification:** Savings, less work, increased tax base

**annual recurring cost:** 0

**budgeted in current f/y (if no, please describe):** No

**revenue agreement:** N/A

**AGREEMENT/RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE APPROVED BY COUNTY COUNSEL:** N/A

**CEO Liaison:** Executive Office

**CEO Review:** Yes

**CEO Comments:**

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Executed By: Atlas Pearson, Senior Deputy Clerk

Date: March 12, 2024

Final Status: **Direction Given to Staff**

