

## A brief history of Class K building code

One of the most democratic, grassroots and effective political movements in recent California history evolved from the conflict between Mendocino County building code ordinances being used as a political tool against a group of new settlers coming back to the land in Mendocino County especially in the 1970s. The result of this conflict was a solid compromise between the residence both new and old and the county departments, crafting together a very effective class K code system which has proven to be very workable since its inception in the early 80s. This new ordinance has provided untold opportunities for family shelter and saved the individual homeowner and renter thousands of dollars and an immense amount of time. Through this enlightened process of appropriate codes for the appropriate situation and people we achieved a local workable plan. The class K of Mendocino County has been so successful that it has been adopted by other counties in California as well.

Up until the 1960s there was no need and no building code as such for residents of Mendocino County. When the county adopted the building code from more urban and suburban models, they failed to recognize the essentially overwhelming rural culture and nature of our County. The vast majority of residents here preferred the freedom and took responsibility for their own building. This does not mean that there was disrespect or negligence generally of the basic common safety codes that were well known from experience by the old-time ranchers and farmers and learned by the newcomers of this county. The essential point here is the right and need to shelter oneself and one's family is a basic human right and as distressing as it might sound it is a right that is under constant assault historically from not only inequitable economic opportunities of capitalism generally but it is also under assault from some special interests right now in our County.

There is significant irony that three or four decades after this landmark progressive decision for class K rules, and when land, feasible opportunity to build your own house, and affordable rentals are all on historic low level of availability except for the wealthy few, that will are now faced with the undermining of the class K ordinances as established in the legal document, the General plan. There is something terribly wrong with this picture. To undermine class K would be to blatantly ignore the conflict with California state mandate for the need of County of Mendocino to provide affordable housing. The availability of affordable housing is now at a crisis level, yet we are gathered here to fight for the right which we have already earned historically and politically as well as the basic inalienable right of all people to have affordable shelter.

It is essential that we the people of Mendocino County ensure that the rules enacted for our supposed benefit don't preclude or reduce the opportunities for us and our children to have adequate shelter here in our own County.

*Thank you*

*Rob Goodel*

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2018 FEB 27 PM 9 18

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