

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

SOUTH CENTRAL COAST AREA  
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**W 18a**

January 25, 1996

**TO: Commissioners and Interested Persons**

**FROM: Steve Scholl, South Central Coast District Director**  
**Rebecca Richardson, Coastal Program Analyst**

**SUBJECT: History and Background of Second Units & Guesthouses in the City of Malibu & the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone**

The issue of second units on lots with primary residences has been raised by the Commission many times since the adoption of the Coastal Act. Commission review of coastal development permits and Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) has raised issues with statewide consistency. Statewide, additional dwelling units on single family parcels take on a variety of different functions which, in large part consist of: 1) **a second unit with kitchen facilities (includes a granny unit, caretaker's unit and farm labor unit); and 2) a guesthouse without kitchen facilities.** Past Commission action has consistently found that both second units and guesthouses inherently have the potential to cumulatively impact coastal resources, which include coastal access and coastal recreation. As such, conditions on coastal development permits and standards within LCPs have been required to limit the size and number of such units.

In the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains area, the Commission policy is to allow a 750 sq. ft. detached second unit or guesthouse. This policy was reviewed by the Commission in the certification of the Malibu Land Use Plan in 1986 and has been subsequently upheld in over a thousand permit actions. In the Commission's review and certification of the LUP, it found that placing an upper limit on the size of the second unit was necessary given the traffic and infrastructure constraints which exist in Malibu and given the abundance of existing vacant residential lots. A smaller unit, which could be occupied by one or two people, was found to have less impact on the limited capacity of PCH, other roads and coastal resources than an ordinary single family house. Similar to the Malibu area, the Commission has maintained that restrictions on second units in other coastal jurisdictions are necessary in order to insure overall land use densities that are consistent with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act.

The City of Malibu, which lies entirely within the Coastal Zone, incorporated in 1991 and in July of 1991 the City adopted an Interim Zoning Code. More recently, in November, 1995, the City adopted a General Plan. Pursuant to the provisions in the City's Zoning Code, residential zones are afforded increased building densities which include one SFD, one 1200 sq. ft. second unit and an unlimited number of 750 sq. ft. guest units, providing that the maximum lot coverage is not exceeded. As the Commission is aware, neither the General Plan nor the Zoning Code have been subject to the Commission's review and certification, via the LCP process. Incremental policy changes by the City which are absent new information or data force the Commission to act in a capacity similar to that of a Planning Commission and review project's on a case by case basis. Therefore, the proliferation of large second units and unlimited ancillary structures throughout the City effectively increases the intensity and density of residential lot development without consideration of cumulative impacts on locating development in areas able to accommodate it. It is recommended by staff that the Commission consider an interim policy which would remain in effect up to and until the City has an effective LCP which would maintain the allowance of one second unit but allow for an increased size limit over 750 sq. ft. with adequate mitigation. As such, the Commission will not prejudice the City's ability to prepare an LCP.

*Attached is a chart of LCP certification status and second unit standards*

## **SECOND UNIT STANDARDS IN THE COASTAL ZONE**

<b>JURISDICTION</b>	<b># OF 2ND UNITS</b>	<b>MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE</b>	<b>MAX. SIZE OF SECOND UNITS</b>	<b>RECENT LCP AMENDMENT</b>
<b>City of Encinitas</b>	1 unit	10, 000 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft. - 2nd unit <b>OR</b> 640 sq. ft. guest unit	LCPA 1-95-B Oct. 10-13, 1995
<b>County of Del Norte</b>	1 unit		700 sq. ft.	LCPA 1-95
<b>County of Santa Barbara</b>	1 unit No Unit - Rural Residential	10, 000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft. possible on 49 lots	LCPA 3-93-B
<b>San Luis Obispo County</b>	1 unit	2 acres	800 to 1200 sq. ft.	LCPA 2-95 Oct. 13, 1995
<b>City of Santa Cruz</b>	1 unit	7,000 sq. ft.	500 sq. ft. Limit 25 approvals per year	Certified
<b>City of Laguna Beach</b>	1 unit	9,000 sq. ft.	640 sq. ft.	Certified
<b>City of Imperial Beach</b>	NO units in SFR zone	not permitted in R-1 zone		LCPA 3-92
<b>County of Ventura</b>	1 unit		700 sq. ft.	Certified
<b>City of Malibu</b>	<b>NO LIMIT</b> <b>1 second unit</b> <b>PLUS</b> <b>Guest Units</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>1200 sq. ft. 2nd unit</b> <b>and</b> <b>750 sq. ft. guest units</b>	<b>Not Certified</b>