

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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**F8a**

**A-1-HUM-22-0011 (Brodt)**

**May 13, 2022**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**From:** [Matthew Butterick](#)  
**To:** [NorthCoast@Coastal](mailto:NorthCoast@Coastal)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on May 2022 Agenda Item Friday 8a - Appeal No. A-1-HUM-22-0011 (At The Bluff Farm Stay, Humboldt Co.)  
**Date:** Sunday, May 1, 2022 7:49:13 AM

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My wife and I were guests several times at Brian and Merritt Brodt's farmstay property near Ferndale CA. We encourage the Coastal Commission to affirm their permit.

As Los Angeles residents for nearly 20 years, we had never investigated Humboldt County. The Brodts' property was our introduction to the area, which rivals any coastal region in California for its beauty and tranquility. The actual lodgings are inside a historic farmhouse set amidst the Brodts' pastures — there were literally cows outside our bedroom window.

The Brodts themselves are wonderfully warm and kind, taking us on a tour of their commercial organic dairy, where they combine a longstanding family tradition of exceptional dairy production with new techniques and technologies. They told us that diversifying their dairy operation with activities like the farmstay is part of how they ensure these farming traditions can survive and get passed down to the next generation. We met their son who helps manage the dairy, and their daughter who came up with the farmstay idea. It is a true multigenerational family operation. Unfortunately many of these family dairies have already disappeared from Humboldt County over the last 30 years.

As a direct result of our visits with the Brodts, my wife and I became more frequent visitors to Humboldt County. We have recommended the Brodts' farmstay property to many friends in Los Angeles. There's certainly nothing like it near Los Angeles, nor in any of the dozens of farm towns in California that we've visited.

Humboldt County already has its fair share of corporate-branded hotels, which are much like the ones you'd find anywhere else. The Brodts' farmstay, by contrast, highlights everything that makes the coastal region of Humboldt County special — the terrain, the climate, the agriculture. Not only is it a unique and valuable addition to the Ferndale area, but it also deserves to be considered a model for agricultural tourism in the California coastal region.

For these reasons, we hope the Coastal Commission will affirm the Brodts' farmstay permit and allow them to continue sharing this beautiful region of California with visitors.

Matthew Butterick  
Los Angeles CA

**From:** [Joby Rumiano](#)  
**To:** [NorthCoast@Coastal](mailto:NorthCoast@Coastal)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on May 2022 Agenda Item Friday 8a - Appeal No. A-1-HUM-22-0011 (At The Bluff Farm Stay, Humboldt Co.)  
**Date:** Monday, May 2, 2022 3:04:32 PM  
**Attachments:** [Brodt Letter of Recommendation.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon,

Please see attached for a Letter of Recommendation to be read in support of the Farm Stay at The Bluff agricultural experience.

Sincerely,

Joby Rumiano

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

# RUMIANO C H E E S E

1919-2019 HONORING THE PAST,  
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

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May 2, 2022

Farm Stay at The Bluff

RE: Letter of Recommendation

for Merritt and Brian Brodt

**To: California Coastal Commission**

Merritt and Brian Brodt and their family have been dairy farming in Humboldt County for five generations. As a fourth-generation dairy processor here at Rumiano Cheese Company I write this letter in support of the proposed "Farm Stay at The Bluff" agricultural experience. This unique experience will allow guests to gain knowledge of a working organic dairy with the comfort of returning to the modern-day recently restored 1852 Farmhouse at The Bluff. Visitors will be able to enjoy locally made dairy products including organic cheese, butter, and milk while staying overnight.

Venues such as Farm Stay at The Bluff allow farmers to diversify into new businesses providing additional jobs while at the same time promoting the growing local agricultural tourism industry. As lifelong residents of Humboldt County, the Brodts are aware of the appeal of the rural lifestyle and seek to support the genuine topics being used by the Humboldt County Visitors and Convention Bureau to promote the area.

As mentioned, Farm Stay at The Bluff will be a positive addition to our local agricultural community by educating guests about the great history of the dairy industry in Humboldt County and showing modern workings of an organic dairy. This experience will bring attention to the differences in dairy compared to other parts of California and the country, where geographic and climate challenges negatively impact operations and effect overall perceptions of the dairy industry.

Historic Ferndale with its fine Victorian Houses known as "Butterfat Palaces" due to their connection to dairy, is a great destination to visit allowing tourists and locals alike to experience everything that is Humboldt County, from seeing the Coastal Redwoods to the Pacific Ocean and Lost Coast. Farm Stay at The Bluff will be a positive addition, and option for people to experience while visiting.

Sincerely,



Joby Rumiano

RE: Brodt "Farm Stay"

APPEAL: # A-1-HUM-22-0011

DATE: May 6, 2022

Dear Commissioners,

The question before the commission is "Does this project" raise a Substantial Issue?

AGRICULTURE EXCLUSIVE (AE) to COMMERCIAL RECREATION IS A SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE. (PERIOD)

The project is a request for "modification" within an existing permit for a large event center, that was conditionally approved in 2020 with 23 Conditions imposed by the Humboldt County Planning Commissioners. It has been operating with little regard for compliance or enforcement for the majority of these conditions, others were only addressed after nearly one year of extensive effort to address one of the health and safety issues, many others remain in noncompliance.

An "Over Night Accommodations" at the Farm House on this property was one condition that was clearly stated, if violated it could be grounds for revocation of the existing permit, as overnight accommodations are not allowed in this zoning.

By simply changing the term to "Farm Stay" (NOTE: Guests have to drive their vehicle FIVE MILES away from this recreational lodging i.e., "Farm Stay", closer to the town of Ferndale in order to experience the farm and dairy activities in images presented to you for your approval. Other images represented are taking advantage of the actual impacted neighboring farm and ranches, which have testified against and had to endure this development and its negative impacts as the "Farm Stay" property and Farm House location begins at the terminal end of a narrow one lane, recently paved Lane, through existing organic farm pastures, old growth redwood snags, full time farm residences. The barn on the property became the commercial event center. There are no farm animals present at this location. It appears the Event Center and overnight lodging is the primary activity at this location in AE Coastal Zoning. It has been advertised at venues in Las Vegas and on global internet platforms. The iconic image of its Large Kitchen "fully stocked kitchen" (which by definition makes it a vacation rental) if used, will be difficult if not impossible to enforce. Material submitted reads "only guests of the Farm Stay will be served food from the kitchen", "great for large gatherings". The required conditions for it to be a "Farm Stay" would make it impossible to enforce with its kitchen access and entire house rental use.

This Modification within the permit will try to allow for overnight transient recreational accommodations and extend operation times of the intensive disruptive recreational activities currently set at six months per year (up to 200 car parking and 250 guests in original permit) to expand to allow transient access 24 hours per day, 365 days per year with unknow transient activities to the noted and testified detriment of the impacted surrounding agricultural properties both during daytime and night hours year round. (Please see/listen to the Planning Commission hearing on 3/2/2022).

It seems that the lack of any environmental review in any stage of this permit, in this quiet AE zone of high biological significance and the cohabitation and importance to the existing surrounding organic farming may make it difficult for an accurate assessment from individuals with non-agricultural and

biological back grounds, to be familiar with its significant negative and far reaching impact, to both domestic animals and wildlife on the lands in which they both exist in this specific location near the confluence of two of northern California's wild rivers and wetland habitat. Some species are of State and Federal concern that historically cohabitate, forage, nest and reproduce on these farm properties that are disrupted by these activities.

There are many creative ways and beautiful areas and lodging, with appropriate zoning, for the applicant to continue the message and experience of farming and for the economic gain for the community within the Ferndale area.

The nod of approval from the organizations such as the local Farm Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce are economically driven for expansion and development which are at odds with and the reason why the Coastal Act was created in the first place.

If approved, the economic gain would likely set precedence for other farms to follow for development at the detriment of the most highly rated soil and farm land in the State of California, which is beginning to be targeted by developers for expansion.

I hope after reviewing these facts you will reconsider the staff recommendation.

Thank You,

John Brezina,

Appellant

## Public Comment on May 2022 Agenda Item Friday 8a - Appeal No. A-1-HUM-22-0011 (At The Bluff Farm Stay, Humboldt Co.)

Jack Rice <jack.rice@yahoo.com>

Wed 5/11/2022 12:16 PM

To: NorthCoast@Coastal <NorthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Holloway, Catherine@Coastal <catherine.holloway@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

The Humboldt Prosperity Alliance (HPA) encourages the Commission to follow the staff recommendation and determine that no substantial issues exist regarding the appeal of the At The Bluff Farm Stay.

Jack Rice, a board member of HPA, commented before the County of Humboldt Planning Commission at its February 2, 2022 meeting where the CDP and CUP modification were unanimously approved.

Because the staff report clearly delineates the reasons the appeal does not raise substantial issues, we will not reiterate those particulars. But we would like to provide additional perspective on three points we hope is useful for your consideration.

First, Farm Stays are an important form of agritourism that provide the public with the opportunity to enjoy rural landscapes while exploring how farmers and ranchers in California produce our food. It also gives farming and ranching families the opportunity to adapt to changing times by finding ways to diversify their operations. Using the old farmhouse to support recreational, educational, and economic opportunities is just what we need to keep our farms and food supply sustainable and give the public more opportunities to enjoy rural California.

Second, a Farm Stay is practically very compatible with the other uses in the area. Using the old farmhouse as a place for visitors to stay while they enjoy the area and learn a bit about agriculture isn't going to impact the area any differently than when the house was a permanent residence. In fact, there likely will be much less traffic (guests probably won't have school, soccer, softball...) and the visitors are courteous and polite.

Third, the Brodt family is passionate about telling people about agriculture. Visitors to the At The Bluff Farm Stay have a real opportunity to learn about agriculture both on the 120 acre farm where the farm stay is located as well as the other aspects of the Brodt family's operation. It really would be an amazing agritourism opportunity just to spend time enjoying the farm where farmhouse is located. But the Brodt family goes above and beyond by also including the opportunity to visit dairy facilities and other aspects of their farm. This is due to the fact that they are committed to providing opportunities for visitors to learn about agriculture in the Eel River Valley.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Jack Rice