



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcounty.us

REBUILDING PROCESS STREAMLINED

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved several changes making it easier for survivors of the CZU Lightning Complex fire to recover and rebuild.

Among the actions taken by the Board was providing direction to the County's Planning Department to increase the resources available to process building and related permits for reconstruction; eliminating the need for demolition permits for those following approved debris removal processes; increasing options for temporary housing solutions for fire evacuees including on fire-damaged properties; eliminate or delay some building-related fees; allow the use of the Felton Quarry for processing hardscape materials from damaged properties; initiate a process to allow reconstruction of non-permitted structures; and direction to explore flexibility on the timeline for state-required septic upgrades and alternative water and power options for temporary residences.

In total, the CZU Lightning Complex fires destroyed 911 homes, three multi-family residences, 148 commercial or mixed-use buildings and 391 minor structures. Preliminary estimates place the total damage valuation at \$340 million, which includes extensive damage to public infrastructure such as roads and water systems.

The Board also approved a new urgency ordinance prohibiting price-gouging in goods, services or housing. Existing law limits certain price increases in these areas to no more than 10 percent in the 30 days after a disaster declaration. The new ordinance authorizes the Board or the Director of Emergency Services to extend those restrictions at 30-day intervals as needed. Violations are a misdemeanor punishable by fines of \$1,000 or up to one year in jail. Violators are also subject to civil penalties up to \$10,000.

The Board also authorized hotel stays in excess of 30 days for fire evacuees.