

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Pacific Grove's STR initiative certified for election**

Petitions to limit short-term vacation rentals in Pacific Grove received nearly twice as many signatures as required to put the measure on the November ballot, county election officials told the city this week.

Monterey County Registrar of Voters Claudio Valenzuela notified city officials that his office examined petitions submitted for the initiative and projected 1,646 valid voter signatures on them -- 17% of the city's registered voters -- far more than the 10% required to put an initiative on the ballot.

The registrar's certification will now be presented to the city council to decide whether to adopt the initiative as an ordinance or present it to voters on the Nov. 6 election ballot.

Residents fed up with the city's failure to keep motel-like short-term vacation rentals out of residential neighborhoods formed a public action committee, Pacific Grove Neighbors United ([www.pgneighbors.com](http://www.pgneighbors.com)), to write the language in the initiative. The committee started circulating petitions on Jan. 20 to get the signatures required to put the initiative on the ballot, then submitted those signatures on May 3. The county elections department acted quickly to verify the signatures and certify them.

Ironically, the certification was dated May 22, the same day the city conducted a lottery to reduce the number of short-term vacation rentals and break up concentrations on particular blocks.

"We do support 'thinning the herd' on these over-dense blocks, but the lottery process only rearranges the deck chairs. In the current process, 45 of those 'lost' licenses will be allowed to shift to other neighborhoods as long as they stay within the city-wide cap of 250," said Luke Coletti, a spokesperson for Pacific Grove Neighbors United. And there's nothing to keep the city council from increasing the 250 cap at any time.

"The only real protection for our residential areas is for voters to adopt the initiative so STR limits and regulations can't be changed without a vote of the people," Coletti said.

The certified initiative would restore the city's zoning rules and prohibit short-term vacation rentals in residential areas outside the coastal zone, which is overseen by the state Coastal Commission beyond the reach of local voters.

The initiative would allow STRs in commercial zones. It would also allow seasonal rentals of 30 days or more and home sharing (short-term room renting in the home you occupy) throughout the city.

The Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce has joined with the neighbors opposing STRs because local inns and motels have found overnight house rentals are cutting into their occupancy rates. Cutting house rentals should boost hotel occupancy and increase their transient occupancy tax (TOT) collections.

Overnight rentals of houses and apartments are banned by both Monterey and Carmel and were also banned in Pacific Grove until a few years ago. Residents who find their neighborhoods disrupted and degraded by the commercialization asked the city to control them for at least three years – through lengthy hearings and discussions and occasional formal complaints – before turning to the initiative process.

The web site [www.pgneighbors.com](http://www.pgneighbors.com) provides details on the initiative, the reasons for it, and displays a graphic map to show how widespread the intrusion is currently.

# MONTEREY COUNTY ELECTIONS

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## Certificate to Initiative

WHEREAS, City of Pacific Grove Ballot Initiative Banning and Prohibiting Short-Term Rentals in All Residential Districts Outside the Coastal Zone, was filed in the office of the Pacific Grove City Clerk on May 3, 2018 and transferred to Elections for signature verification the same day.

WHEREAS, the petition consists of 78 sections and 1,901 signatures;

WHEREAS, each section contains signatures purporting to be the signatures of qualified Electors of this county; that attached to each petition at the time it was filed was an affidavit purporting to be the affidavit of the persons who solicited the signatures, and containing the dates between which the purported qualified electors signed the petition; that the affiant stated his or her own qualifications, that he or she had solicited the signatures upon that section, that all of the signatures were made in his or her presence, and that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief each signature to that section was the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code § 9115, of the 1,901 signatures submitted, Elections verified a random sampling of 500 signatures by examining the records of registration of this County, current and in effect at the respected purported dates of such signing, to determine what number of qualified electors signed the petition;

WHEREAS, Elections Code § 9215 provides that the minimum number of signatures required for an initiative petition submitted to the City is not less than 10% of the voters in the City, according to the last report of registration by the County Elections Official to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 2187, and there are 9,701 voters in the City.

WHEREAS, of the 500 signatures verified in the random sampling, 447 were deemed valid, 53 signatures were found not sufficient, 5 of which were not sufficient because of duplicate.

WHEREAS, the projected number of valid signatures on said petition is 1,646 signatures or 17% of the registered voters in the City of Pacific Grove.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of May 2018.

  
Claudio Valenzuela, Registrar of Voters  
County of Monterey

