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KINGS COUNTY FINALIZES CAMPING BAN WITH FOCUS ON SAFETY AND SUPPORT



Hanford, CA — In a decisive move to address growing public safety and sanitation concerns, the Kings County Board of Supervisors approved the second reading of the Unlawful Camping and Obstruction of Public Rights-of-Way Ordinance during their March 18, 2025 meeting. The new law, which takes effect on April 17, allows for the abatement of unauthorized encampments on both public and private property while emphasizing non-criminal pathways to compliance.

The ordinance, nearly a year in the making, was developed through input from county department heads, legal counsel, and the Kings/Tulare Homelessness Alliance. It is designed to give enforcement agencies flexibility while prioritizing due process and compassionate alternatives for those impacted.

"This is not about criminalizing homelessness," said Administrative Analyst Alex Walker, who played a key role in drafting the ordinance. This is about ensuring [health](#) and safety in our communities while building in mechanisms to help individuals access services, not just face penalties.

Key Provisions of the Ordinance:

- Prohibits camping and obstruction of sidewalks, streets, and other rights-of-way



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- Establishes a formal abatement policy, including advanced notice and site assessments
- Encourages referrals to community-based services as an alternative to citations or arrest
- Includes property reclamation procedures and protections for pets
- Provides options for court diversion programs and treatment plans in lieu of fines or jail time

A Compassionate Enforcement Model

Supervisors emphasized that enforcement will not be heavy-handed. The ordinance explicitly allows officers to bypass arrest or prosecution when individuals agree to engage with [local services](#). According to Walker, this approach is more lenient than state-recommended models, offering extra notice, more transparency, and additional opportunities for outreach.

Supervisor Robert Thayer called the ordinance "the best of both worlds," offering both structure and sensitivity to the challenges faced by the unhoused population. Other board members echoed this sentiment, pointing to recent public health hazards at local parks and community [outcry over deteriorating conditions](#) in public spaces.

"This ordinance does not solve homelessness," said Supervisor Rusty Robinson. But it is a necessary piece of the puzzle, one that lets us [protect our communities](#) while still offering support and hope to those who need it.

Community Feedback and Future Steps

During [public comment](#), local advocate Yvette Ayala raised concerns about access barriers to services and the need for trauma-informed approaches. She emphasized that how services are delivered can make the difference between someone accepting help or retreating further into isolation.



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[County staff responded by pointing to a growing](#) network of collaborative resources, including a new 200-bed shelter set to break ground this summer, expanded behavioral health outreach, and participation in the statewide CARE Court initiative.

As [Kings County](#) prepares for implementation, officials encourage residents to stay engaged. The [Kings County](#) Homelessness Collaborative continues to meet monthly and is expected to play a central role in refining how the ordinance is put into practice.

For more information on the ordinance and available resources, visit <https://www.countyofkings.com>.