

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 518**

---

**Introduced by Assembly Member Ward**

February 10, 2025

---

An act to amend Section 18862.43 of, and to add Part 2.3.5 (commencing with Section 18890) of Division 13 of, the Health and Safety Code, relating to land use.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 518, as introduced, Ward. Low-impact camping areas.

Existing law, the Special Occupancy Parks Act, establishes requirements for the construction, maintenance, occupancy, use, and design of special occupancy parks. Existing law defines “special occupancy park” to mean a recreational vehicle park, temporary recreational vehicle park, incidental camping area, or tent camp.

This bill would specify that, for purposes of that act, a special occupancy park does not include a low-impact camping area, as specified, that is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, as specified, authorizing low-impact camping. The bill would define a “low-impact camping area” to mean any area of private property that provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation, as defined, for recreational purposes that is not a commercial lodging facility and meets specified requirements. The bill would require the county in which the low-impact camping area is located to enforce some of those requirements, relating to waste disposal and quiet hours, as specified. The bill would require that a county that has authorized low-impact camping to take specified actions, including, among others, to establish a registry of low-impact camping areas, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 18862.43 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18862.43. “Special occupancy park” means a recreational vehicle park, temporary recreational vehicle park, incidental camping area, or tent camp. *“Special occupancy park” does not include a low-impact camping area, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 18890 if the low-impact camping area meets all of the requirements of subdivision (b) of section 18890 and is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, subject to the requirements of existing law, authorizing low-impact camping.*

SEC. 2. Part 2.3.5 (commencing with Section 18890) is added to Division 13 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:

#### PART 2.3.5. LOW-IMPACT CAMPING

18890. (a) “Low-impact camping area” means any area of private property that provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation for recreational purposes that is not a commercial lodging facility.

(b) A low-impact camping area is not a special occupancy park, as defined in Section 18862.43, if it is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, subject to the requirements of existing law, authorizing low-impact camping and meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation, not exceeding 14 consecutive nights per camper and not exceeding 28 nights per calendar year per camper.

(2) Includes no more than nine temporary sleeping accommodations.

(3) Does not include a temporary sleeping accommodation that is rented out for permanent human occupancy.

(4) Does not allow for onstreet parking.

(5) Complies with applicable state and local fire safety requirements.

1 (6) Complies with applicable state and local tax requirements,  
2 including, but not limited to, the payment of local transient  
3 occupancy taxes.

4 (7) Complies with applicable local requirements for disposal of  
5 human waste, or in the absence of applicable local requirements,  
6 maintains sanitation facilities that are fully self-contained or  
7 connected to a permitted sewage disposal system serving the  
8 property.

9 (8) Complies with applicable local requirements for disposal of  
10 trash, or in the absence of applicable local requirements, requires  
11 all solid waste to be removed from the premises after each  
12 occupancy and onsite trash receptacles to abide by applicable  
13 animal-protection trash best practices or requirements.

14 (9) Complies with applicable local requirements for quiet hours,  
15 or in the absence of applicable local requirements, enforces quiet  
16 hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

17 (10) Complies with applicable local requirements relating to  
18 low-impact campsites, low-incident camping, or incidental  
19 camping, including, but not limited to, local zoning, permit, lot  
20 size, and setback requirements.

21 (11) Designates an operator or property manager who is  
22 available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

23 (12) Includes no more than one temporary sleeping  
24 accommodation per acre and is located on a parcel of two acres  
25 or more.

26 (13) Requires all temporary sleeping accommodations to be  
27 located no less than 200 feet from any offsite residence and no  
28 less than 30 feet from any adjoining property or road.

29 (14) Is not located on a site that meets both of the following:

30 (A) A site that is a legal parcel or parcels located in a city if,  
31 and only if, the city boundaries include some portion of either an  
32 urbanized area or urban cluster, as designated by the United States  
33 Census Bureau, or, for unincorporated areas, a legal parcel or  
34 parcels wholly within the boundaries of an urbanized area or urban  
35 cluster, as designated by the United States Census Bureau.

36 (B) A site in which at least 75 percent of the perimeter of the  
37 site adjoins parcels that are developed with urban uses. For  
38 purposes of this paragraph, parcels that are separated only by a  
39 street or highway shall be considered to be adjoined.

1 (15) Has not been used as a special occupancy park for the last  
2 five years unless both of the following are true:

3 (A) The area was a special occupancy park before January 1,  
4 2024.

5 (B) The area met the requirements of this subdivision on January  
6 1, 2023.

7 (c) A county that has authorized low-impact camping shall do  
8 the following:

9 (1) Establish a registry of low-impact camping areas which may  
10 include, but not be limited to, the number or operators authorized  
11 in the county, a site address of such areas, the number of lots and  
12 types of temporary sleeping accommodations, the facility owner  
13 and operator names, the date a low-impact camping area is  
14 established, summaries of all code enforcement investigations  
15 associated with low-impact camping areas, amendments to this  
16 information, and any other relevant information deemed appropriate  
17 by the county.

18 (2) Establish a complaint program to support code enforcement  
19 related to low-impact camping areas.

20 (3) Require all low-impact camping owners or operators to post,  
21 in a conspicuous location, contact information for the county for  
22 complaints or information related to low-impact camping areas.

23 (d) A county that has authorized low-impact camping shall have  
24 administrative and enforcement authority over this section.

25 (e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

26 (1) “Commercial lodging facility” has the same meaning as the  
27 term “hotel” is defined in subdivision (a) of Section 1865 of the  
28 Civil Code.

29 (2) “Recreational vehicle” has the same meaning as that term  
30 is defined in Section 18010.

31 (3) “Temporary sleeping accommodation” includes, but is not  
32 limited to, a tent, yurt, or recreational vehicle.

33 (f) This section does not authorize an individual to access private  
34 property without the permission of the landowner.

35 (g) This section does not require a county to authorize  
36 low-impact camping. This section establishes minimum  
37 requirements for a county that, by ordinance, elects to authorize  
38 low-impact camping.

O