

✓ County gives a break to 'granny units'

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Housing

SANTA CRUZ — For the next year, the county will give a break on fees to homeowners who want to build "granny units" on their property.

At the suggestion of Third District Supervisor Gary Patton, supervisors Tuesday approved a one-year trial program to exempt second homes no larger than 640 square feet from most county fees. Homeowners will have to pay only the first \$500 in county fees that usually range into the thousands of dollars.

Fees for school impact, fire protection, water and sewer hookups still will be required, but those for such services as drainage, sidewalks, transportation, park, development and plan checks won't be.

Only Live Oak Supervisor Dan Forbus voted against the plan, saying, "When we start waiving electrical fees and plumbing fees, I think we've gone overboard."

Forbus said the exemption will make housing even more expensive. "We're coming to the point we have either affordable housing, or \$250,000 housing. It's completely out of kilter."

Aptos Supervisor Robley Levy also had reservations about waiving fees, but said she'd be willing to support the plan on a trial basis as long as the Planning Department reports back on the distribution of such housing in each supervisorial district.