

# Irked supervisors approve new fees

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A hefty \$1,250 fee will be collected, beginning Jan. 1, from anyone receiving a negative environmental impact declaration from a city or county planning department.

Santa Cruz County supervisors reluctantly approved the state-mandated fee yesterday morning as part of its annual revision of the county's fee schedule. The county will also collect \$850 for each environmental impact report filed.

The money will go to the state Department of Fish and Game to supplement its budget.

Board Chairman Robley Levy seemed to sum up the opinion of the other board members when she termed it "outrageous."

County Planning Director Dianne Guzman said the county normally issues about 1,000 negative declarations a year — including those prepared for variances, minor land divisions or subdivisions. A negative declaration means there is no need for a full

environmental impact report.

That means the county will collect and forward more than \$1.2 million to the state each year.

Negative declarations issued by cities, Guzman said, are subject to the same fees.

It will be up to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to collect the fees when the negative declarations are filed there.

San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Fred Keeley was sharply critical of the Legislature for imposing the fee.

"I don't understand the public policy of requiring a \$1,250 fee for a negative declaration," Keeley. "There is no place in the bill that shows it having any relationship to the actual cost (of Fish and Game) reviewing the negative declaration."

Oh, yes, there is, said Santa Cruz Supervisor Gary Patton.

"The Legislature says it's clearly related to their costs," he said.

Keeley jabbed back, lightheartedly, at Patton.

"It's a dark day when you defend the likes of the State Legislature," he said.

"I'm not defending it," Patton shot back, "just commenting on their actions."

Aside from those new fees, the board made changes — mostly increases — in other fees charged by the county, which affect nearly every department and service offered by county government. For example:

■ The Santa Cruz County Fire Department will charge \$226 for each public fireworks display and \$250 a day to have a fire engine stand by;

■ For those who want to install a propane tank or erect a tent or canopy for public assembly, the fee is \$121.20;

■ The Municipal Court will charge \$56 — up from \$53 — each time a defendant files an answer to a civil suit;

■ An explosives permit issued by the Sheriff's Office costs \$60;

■ If the coroner picks up a dead body and stores it, the fee is \$200.

He charges another \$106 to embalm it; and

■ Cardroom permits will go up from \$35 to \$50, and for those who want a concealed-weapons permit, the fee is now \$60, up from the \$50 charged this year. The annual renewal fee has increased from \$15 to \$25.

In the public health sector, a tuberculosis patient will have to pay \$15 to get clearance to return to work. The old fee was \$10. A visit to the county's Mental Health clinic will increase \$4, to \$99.

Some of the county's medical charges dropped, however. Cleaning wax out of an ear will cost \$25, down \$9 from the old fee. But fitting a birth-control diaphragm will cost \$34 now, up from the former \$25 cost. Removing an IUD costs \$25, up \$5.

The cost of immunizations won't change. There's no charge for routine immunizations. Yellow fever shots cost \$50; cholera, \$6.50; typhoid, \$5; immune globulin, \$10; tetanus-diphtheria, \$5.

The county will mark medical supplies 50 percent over its cost.