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Welfare
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Supervisors Apparently Ready To Drop 'SC County Policy'

County supervisors apparently have heard enough about their "Santa Cruz County policy on food stamps" and are willing to quietly rescind the policy Tuesday.

Tucked away on next week's agenda as a consent item is a recommendation from Social Services Director David Singleton to drop the policy, which demands a legal address to get food stamps.

Such items often are passed without comment of the board.

The policy was handed down Jan. 16 by three supervisors following press accounts of illegal campers in the Sycamore Grove area who were issued stamps by using the "grove" as an

address.

Supervisors Dan Forbus, Marilyn Liddicoat and Pat Liberty agreed that by issuing stamps "the county was aiding and abetting the felony of trespassing."

Singleton cautioned the board that the state may not look at it that way — and it didn't.

State official Kathy B. Lewis, chief of food stamps, wrote on Jan. 19, the "only prosecution and enforcement right and responsibility is for food stamp program fraud, not for violations of other state and local ordinances, misdemeanors, or felonies."

Under state-federal regulations on food stamps, the only requirements are financial need and that a person is a

resident of a county, and not just on vacation.

Supervisors said when making the new policy that if the state-federal regulations clearly stated that this county was in violation with its new policy, they would change the policy.

Supervisor Gary Patton voted against the policy, asking the board to delay any decision until it discovered the legal position of such an action.

Liddicoat urged the policy, saying, "We shouldn't encourage people to come in and squat under every bridge (and) we should take the most stringent tack possible to discourage transients from moving into Santa Cruz County."