



Monterey County Rooster Keeping Referral Update

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M.C. Ordinance 5249



As of July 14, 2015, no Rooster Keeping Operation can legally operate in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County without either a permit exemption or a permit.

- Requires permitting for Rooster Keeping Operations where 5 or more roosters are kept on any single property within the unincorporated areas of Monterey County.
- Annual renewal required.
- 4 limited exemptions may apply (Poultry Operation, Poultry Hobbyist, Educational and FFA/4H).
- Rooster housing requirements apply.
- The Animal Control Officer is the main point of contact and enforcement for this permitting ordinance.



Enforcement & Challenges

- OAII, ACOS and Field Services Supervisor are key staff involved in enforcement.
 - OA II staff assigned to field services assists with applications, fee collection and inspection coordination.
 - 2 ACOS required for each inspection, which is annual.
 - Supervisor oversee overall program and assists as needed.
 - Enforcement of this permit is in addition to other calls for service, however, is not considered a priority in terms of immediate response.
- The entire permit process is labor intensive, which is further impacted when staffing levels are low.
- Lacks enforcement powers, only sanction is continued citations.
- Nothing to authorize bird removal.
- Onus is on department to prove wrongdoing, issue notices and citations.



Referral Summary

9.25.24 – Referral 2024.11 assigned to HD

10.1.24 - Preliminary Response provided to Board to return in 6 months.

10.17.24 – Presented to HRAS JPA Board

Fall/Winter 2024-Staff had begun to gather input from other departments and agencies to include Housing and Community Development, Agricultural Commissioner and SPCA for Monterey County. Research was done to look at how and where other counties have rooster related ordinances.

During this time, AB 928 proposed at state level to limit number of roosters per parcel size. Staff spoke internally to pause work on this to determine as State adopting would be helpful at County level.

5.15.25 – Letter of Support for AB 928 presented to HRAS JPA Board and was approved. County also provided support through the Legislative Committee.

July 2025- AB 928 pulled from Committee due to concerns raised from rooster owning constituents in the Central Valley.

To Date - moving forward with looking into modifications at County level, to include determining if moving to update or current zoning codes are appropriate and removing the current permit ordinance within Title 8.



Next Steps

Staff will come back within 6 months and plans to work on the following during that time:

- Continue discussions with HCD to determine whether the zoning approach is feasible, as noted in other Counties.
 - HCD has requested time to research this process and will need direction on the prioritization of this ordinance update. Further time may be needed if this approach is deemed feasible.
- If it is determined that the zoning approach is not feasible and that maintaining a permit is still adequate, Animal Services will propose changes to the current ordinance to include updating the permit application process, restricting breeds, defining process for removal of birds and/or limiting roosters per parcel size.
 - The HRAS JPA Board of Directors will need to take a position on the updates prior to bringing back to the Board of Supervisors.

Questions?

