



Low Impact Camping

What is Assembly Bill 518 and how would it work in El Dorado County?

Assembly Bill (AB) 518 is an optional State developed program that authorizes the use of private properties for temporary low impact camping. Counties can adopt AB 518 with the minimum standards set by the State program and impose additional restrictions or regulations to fit local needs and safety concerns. The participating jurisdiction must enact a local low impact camping ordinance and submit the ordinance, along with regulation and enforcement details, to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Low impact camping is temporary tent or RV camping on private property that is rented to visitors with set limitations on duration and acreage, among other standards. What makes the camping “low impact” is that the program is designed for non-commercial use on privately owned land in agricultural, rural, and non-urbanized areas. It does not require a State Commercial Use Permit or adherence to the State Special Occupancy Park Permit requirements for commercial campgrounds.

Adopting AB 518 in the County would not affect current campground standards, as commercial campgrounds are different from low impact camping. Campgrounds are currently permitted in El Dorado County with a conditional use permit in applicable zones, and subject to the standards outlined in the [County Zoning Ordinance Sec. 130.40.100 \(Campgrounds and Recreational Vehicle Parks\)](#), and fall under a commercial business use category. Adopting AB 518 would allow for non-commercial camping to be added to the Zoning Code as a separate use type.

If the County pursues a low-impact camping ordinance, the effort would include development of County regulations and zone-specific permitting processes for camping operations on privately owned land, while essentially waiving the expensive and time-consuming State requirements for applicable properties. This would ease financial restraints for private landowners and create the potential for a new supplemental income source.

Standard / Regulation	Current Campground and RV Parks Requirements	AB 518 Low Impact Camping Requirements
Use Category	Commercial	Private
Permitted Zones	LA, PA, AG, RL, FR, TPZ, RFL, RFH	To be determined
County Permit Requirement	Conditional Use Permit (CUP)	To be determined
CA State Permits Required?	Yes	No
Minimum property acreage	3 acres	2 acres
Maximum allowed sites	9 per acre	9 total per property, 1 per acre
Maximum length of stay	30 days	14 days