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Editorial: Plan for emergency housing in Bolinas comes at right time

By **MARIN IJ EDITORIAL BOARD**

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The Bolinas Community Land Trust's creation of emergency housing on a large parcel off Mesa Road is an example of a community taking care of its own.

The temporary camp, consisting of 27 new recreational vehicles, is providing safe and sanitary housing for many of the local labor families living in substandard housing on Tacchera ranchland. Most of those estimated 60 residents are low-income Latino families, including more than a dozen children.

The need is clear.

As one resident put it at last week's Marin County Board of Supervisors meeting, "Our hardships have been hiding in your plain sight for two decades." Through an interpreter, Ingris Lopez Hernandez said she and others – many of them local agricultural workers – endured the poor living conditions because they feared they would lose what they had.

The county last year inspected the ranch housing and found residents living in unpermitted trailers, mobile homes and other structures that are, according to the county, "unfit for habitation."



The county reported that some temporary improvements were made, but with the onset of rainy weather, the living situation in those units is

preventing lower-income residents from being

It asked the county for and received \$622,000 to create and maintain the \$2.6 million emergency camp.

The trust has asked the Marin Community Foundation for a similar-sized grant, which seems to be a good fit for one of the Buck Trust's commitments – providing care for the needy.

The county's financial commitment is a sign of it stepping up to its responsibility.

Supervisors also approved an emergency permit allowing the construction of a mound septic system to which the vehicles will connect.

That Bolinas residents supporting the land trust's initiative have come up with their own plan for their own neighbors is an impressive plus.

The area for the camp is 20 acres purchased by the trust from the Tacherra ranch.

There's legal wrangling over living conditions and back rent, but the need for safer and sanctuary housing should not have to wait for those disputes to be resolved.

Nor should there be a wait for the funding, approvals and construction of new affordable housing planned for nearby.

Legal action taken by current and former residents claim the housing, mostly trailers, include many that lack hot water, heating or proper plumbing.

The trust has already leased the vehicles for the camp, having received a \$500,000 bridge loan from an anonymous donor. It is seeking financial help from other sources, as well.

The trust is responding to a pressing community need with compassion and civic responsibility. The trust, its leadership and supporters, sees a need for providing safe, healthful and sanitary places for people in their community and is doing something about it.

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