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Ridge Law

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cially state or federal government, should dictate what sort of building someone may do on his own land.

"We've got some out here that think that property rights are sacred," said Borling, one of two commissioners who voted to hold a referendum May 8 on whether to opt out of the law. "I look up on the top of the ridge from my carport and see where a man put up two of those TV dishes. It doesn't bother me at all."

He said he sees the ridge law as meddling by politicians who have less of a stake than property owners.

"I think they ought to pass a Piedmont law," he said wryly. "You go to Charlotte, you can't even tell what time it is (without a watch)

until noon, 'cause of all the tall buildings."

But aesthetic considerations are only the visible argument for ridge construction controls. The state law, and all alternative ordinances, address fire safety, water service, sewer service and airplane hazards as well as appearance, said Alan Lang, planner for the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development in Asheville.

Counties seeking local control "had to review it based on those five criteria," Lang said. Local governments were allowed to amend the definition of a ridge to drop the 3,000-foot-elevation requirement, as did the partially low-lying counties of Burke, Transylvania, Henderson, Caldwell, Asheville, Alleghany, Wilkes and Surry.

Others embellished the criteria. Jackson County requires financial proof from developers that they can complete the project. Haywood County requires detailed landscaping and sedimentation plans; Wilkes

County exempts single-family dwellings from the regulation.

The ridge law provides that certain construction is exempt from county government action to enforce it or opt out.

"It's sort of put the house over your position of having to enforce it," said Lang.

"The nature of the law leaves ages local governments to establish their own controls. Despite that, half of the 24 affected counties chose to allow the state ban to take effect."

"I think one of the reasons is that several of the counties, especially the rural counties, don't find comfortable enforcing the ordinance," Lang said, even though "the state is not going to enforce it (the state ridge law) — the enforcement that takes place will be local."

The advantage in accepting the state law is that the county does not have to set up procedures to review and set standards for construction — it simply denudes building permits to those units violating the law.

"It's going to vary from county to county how active they are going to be in enforcing it," Lang said.

Parris

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The old grouse egg out here in the wild woods and they're speckled. They're richer than a hen egg and the yolk in them is almost orange.

"Now, when it comes to gathering your guinea eggs, it's not easy. They won't lay in confinement, only when they're free to roam. And unlike many wild birds that produce only one clutch a year, guinea hens lay continuously from May until cold weather sets in.

"But they don't lay in a fashion that's favorable to the fellow who raises 'em. They hide their nests in

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