

To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

From: Fort Bragg Fire Chief Steve Orsi

04/02/2025

Regarding the issue of giving the County Fire agencies a lower percentage of 172 funds than was agreed to, I have the following thoughts:

Being a part of the FBFD for over 45 years has been an unbelievable ride. From volunteering in my early twenties, to becoming Chief 24 years ago. In that time I come to realize the strong dedication that our firefighters have to not only do the job, but do it to the highest quality. I often get credit for the work we do, but I am always quick to point out where the real credit belongs, the Firefighters, Fire Officers and the Governing Boards that support us.

In my experiences over the years, I have come to realize the unbelievable dedication goes beyond our district. Chiefs and members of fire departments throughout the County of Mendocino share this desire to serve our communities with efficient response whenever called on. What drives all of us to do what we do is often questioned. In my opinion, this drive comes from a strong desire to help those in need. As far "what we get out of it" can vary between individuals. A sense of self-satisfaction, the camaraderie of working as a team, respect given by those who depend on us when they dial 911, the list can go on, but I would like to focus on the respect component.

In looking at the discrepancies between what the agreed upon formula for the fire share of 172 and the actual percentage given, I see a difference of under \$230,000. Now, if we were talking about my personal bank account, that would be huge. We are not. We are talking about the County of Mendocino. We all realize that the County is in financial difficulties. My point here is that \$230k is not a lot of money when dealing with a budget (or even a deficit) as large as the County's. I truly believe that cutting the percentage to save a relatively small amount of money is disrespectful. I also believe that there are areas of financial waste in the County, focusing on an area that the communities as well as governing officials know has the least amount of financial waste to gain a small fraction of revenue is a dis-service to us all.

My hopes are that you as well as the other Supervisors take this opportunity to prove to the fire districts that we are highly regarded by the County for the service we all strive to provide to our communities and beyond.

Thanks for hearing me out, Steve Orsi