



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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March 6, 2024

The Honorable Laphonza Butler
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Fiscal Year 2025 Congressionally Directed Spending/Earmark Request

Dear Senator Butler,

On behalf of the County of Mendocino, I thank you for your commitment to California and Mendocino County's critical issues and projects. Likewise, we are grateful for your efforts in Washington D.C. advocating for significant investments in transportation and infrastructure, healthcare, housing, and energy.

We respectfully bring forward a budget request that represents one of Mendocino County's highest funding priorities – and that we also believe is in alignment with the budget policy priorities of your office:

1. Federal commitment of \$10,000,000 for the new Mendocino County jail facility

Federal funding for this project would make it clear that the government is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. This financial support will be essential in building a modern and secure facility that will benefit inmates, staff, and visitors alike. The government's investment in this project sends a strong message that it takes the issue of public safety seriously and is dedicated to making a positive impact in the region.

In 2017, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors authorized the Sheriff's Office's proposal for SB 844 funding for additional specialty housing and expanded program, training, and mental healthcare space at the County jail and an appropriation for the local match portion of the project. The County's proposal ultimately successfully secured \$25 million in state reimbursement.

The project will be adjacent to the existing jail facility, providing housing, programming, medical and mental health treatment space, and a new public visiting center. Accommodation will include 60

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maximum-security beds, a safety cell, recreation yards, central control, a medical exam room, a dental exam room, a clinical suite, program/group rooms, and staff support space.

From the outset of this project, the County has worked diligently with its design team to contain costs while maintaining the design of the new special needs housing unit to be consistent with its intended mission as a correctional medical and mental health housing and treatment facility.

The State's funding contribution requires State approval before the County proceeds to bid and construction. The County of Mendocino has completed all major tasks needed for approval to proceed to bid. Minor processing delays should be expected with any project, but two specific delays in State processes were quite significant in this case. These delays caused the project's schedule to be extended by approximately two years, which contributed substantially to the projected cost overrun for the project.

The original 2017 budget submitted with the grant application for this project was estimated by staff as \$26.047 million when the California Construction Cost Index (CCCI) was 3.5%, and US Inflation Rates were 2.1%. The CCCI increased to 13.4% in 2021 and remained at 9.3% in 2022. In addition, the US Inflation Rate also increased, up to 7% in 2021 and remaining at 6.5% in 2022. In this climate of dramatically escalating construction costs and overall inflation rates, there have been several project delays, two of which can be directly attributed to State processes. The latest county project cost estimate indicates bids may come in at \$36.9 million. This would result in a county match of \$11.9 million when \$1 million was originally anticipated.

Despite the County's best efforts to contain costs through value engineering and scope reduction, this project was developed during exceptional cost increases exacerbated by supply chain disruption due to COVID-19, tariffs, and a shortage of available construction workers. These cost increases over time, combined with overall inflation that has reached its highest rate in decades, and approximately two years of project delays, have worked against efforts to contain project costs. While the new jail facility would have encountered these unprecedented cost increases and inflationary factors regardless, the extended schedule, due mainly to delays at the State, has increased the project's exposure to volatile market conditions.

We appreciate your consideration of these budget requests, which meet the critical needs of Mendocino County's diverse communities during these challenging times.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (707) 463-4441.

Respectfully,

Maureen Mulheren, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors