

**TO: The Honorable
Dan Gjerde, Chair
Ted Williams, Vice Chair
John Haschak, Supervisor
Glen McGourty, Supervisor
Maureen Mulheren, Supervisor**

I am writing to ask you to NOT support the proposed budget cut of base funding for the Mendocino county Fire Safe County from \$100,000 to \$25,000. I believe it is essential for the County to fund the MCFSC at funding level it did for this fiscal year of \$100,000.

A 75% budget cut to the MCFSC operating budget would severely restrict it's ability to provide necessary and critical fire safe services to the Mendocino County community at a time when we are facing serious drought, predicted not just for this year but in the years to come and, following the worst fire season in California history.

I ask that you fund the MCFSC at it's current year funding of \$100,000. This base operational budget is essential to continue fire safety services in the County and covers costs that are usually not allowable with grant funding. Base funding allows the MCFSC to bring in grants to multiply this initial County investment, which indeed MCFSC has done this past year by essentially 'matching' the County's investment through \$400,000 in grant funds this fiscal year with another \$600,000 expected soon. With no operational base, it is very possible these grants wouldn't be pulled in and the County would lose this additional monetary support. I think MCFSC is a smart investment for the County; where else does the County double a budgetary investment from it's operating budget?

Few if any of the local fire safe councils in the County have nonprofit status like the MCFSC and therefore are not able to apply for the many fire safety grants funds now available from state, federal, and corporate sources. We depend on the MCFSC to bring these resources into Mendocino County and provide essential services like fuel reduction through the Chipper Days program. As an example, just alone in the Mitchell Creek neighborhood last year on just one day of tree service over 70 loads of dry brush clearing by residents was chipped by MCFSC services and either removed or reused for soil conditioning by residents. That is an excellent and critical partnership between the community and local government. More of this work is planned again for this summer and fall. The proposed draconian budget cut to MCFSC would certainly curtail much of the fire safety progress we've made in the county. Please do not support this proposed budget cut.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Anna Garza (Fort Bragg South Fire Safe Council @ Simpson Ln/Mitchell Creek)
Mitchell Creek resident