

May 3, 2021

To: The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Re: May 4 Agenda #5b

Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts Position on PG&E Settlement Funding

The Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts is asking for your support to fund first responder requests for both long-term and short-term strategic priorities. One time PG&E settlement funding is now available for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to direct to critical fire service funding for existing local needs here in Mendocino County. We believe the funding requests from the Redwood Valley and Potter Valley Fire Districts should be first in line for funding.

This Board has passed ordinances and policies that need staffing by fire service professionals, and ongoing coordination is needed to help address increasing challenges faced by your first responder agencies. Seed funding from the PG&E settlement to adopt the dependent Mendocino County Service Area #3 (MCSA#3) Fire District power, and staff a Mendocino County Fire Warden's office is needed now.

The destructive fires of our recent past, added to this year's drought, must drive a robust response by this board to show support for local fire districts and help to address this fear of what's "still to come." Questions will be raised if a fire settlement fund ignores local fire districts' needs.

Currently with the drought conditions, our State/County OES mutual aid system is working to provide local district responses to a year-round fire season. State resources in the winter/early spring are at their lowest staffing levels, requiring our local Fire Districts to provide additional off-season wildfire responses.

Drought conditions that fuel large seasonal fires are a new normal. Local fire service providers are providing additional mutual aid responses to destructive winter storm events while continuing robust EMS first responder services in a pandemic. We need this Board of Supervisors' full support to face these challenges together.

Mendocino County fire service providers support our ambulance service providers. That said, there are recurring drawdowns requiring additional time and effort from local fire service providers to rotate available fire personnel to ambulance services in some areas. We support Jen Banks/Coastal Valley's proposal for EMS funding. Both short-term and long-term funding support is needed for your local Fire/EMS/Ambulance service providers to improve service delivery.

Mendocino County citizens showed a super majority voter support when advising this Board to direct for "public purposes" a new TOT campground tax last year to your local fire service providers. In that spirit we hope that you see the merit of these proposals and support them for funding.

Thank you.

Ben Macmillan for the Mendocino County

Association of Fire Districts