



**Public Health Department
of Mendocino County**

Healthy People, Healthy Communities



Environmental Health

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Date: April 16, 2025
To: CEO Budget Team
From: Marlayna Duley, EH
Subject: Environmental Health Fees

The revised fee worksheet presented today is the result of the CEO Fiscal Team coordinating with departments to standardize the process of developing a fee based upon a common methodology. Previously each department had discretion in developing fees and as a result the approaches differed greatly across departments. This new approach will be applied to all department fees based upon anticipated units of service and current time studies. This new methodology provides increased transparency and consistency. Upon Board adoption of the final budget adjustments to the fees will be brought to the following fee hearing.

In addition to providing directions on the alternate approaches to indirect personnel costs the Board is asked to identify appropriate funding sources for the budget shortfall realized by the division.

The division has implemented a re-distribution of the administrative costs based upon the use of the services rather than an equal percentage distributed across all orgs. As a result, the LEA fees decreased, and the Consumer Protection fees increased.

The fees presented today are based upon an estimated budget for FY 25/26 with anticipated salary increases per union contracts and a total of 16 FTE. They are also based on the salary rate of the most cost-effective incumbent the division anticipates providing the services this next FY.

LEA Fees

The LEA program is staffed with 1 FTE and is responsible for the solid waste facilities, composting operations, landfills, and wood bark facilities. In 2024 the division conducted an extensive time study of this program. Due to its nature there was an opportunity to track the times spent providing services in more detail. For example, the total drive time for each individual facility was tracked and used compared to a county-wide average drive time. The 2024-time study was also able to realize efficiencies with the implementation of the State SWIS portal for records management.

Previous fees attributed 25% of the administrative costs of the division to the LEA fees. In coordination with the CEO fiscal team this approach has been replaced with a distribution based upon the actual use of administrative services. This resulted in an approximate reduction of 24% of the overall administrative costs being attributed to the LEA fees. As a result, there are significant reductions to the fees supporting this program. The majority of these costs were redistributed to the Consumer Protection fees as that program utilizes the majority of administrative services.

Consumer Protection Fees

The Cottage Food and Farmers' Market fees are being brought forward to the Board to re-certify the use of realignment funds to subsidize them to the following permit costs:

Cottage Food A - \$94

Cottage Food B - \$199

Farmers' Market - \$0

Per previous Board direction there was to be no change in these fees from the Spring 2023 fees which is what the totals above represent. Previously the Board directed the difference in the cost of the service and this base rate be made up with Public Health Realignment funds.

As mentioned above the redistribution of administrative costs raised consumer protection fees. Both the time studies and units of service were updated in 2024 and applied to the proposed consumer protection fees.

HazMat Fees

The Hazmat fees were last updated in December 2023. The proposed fees are based upon updated staffing levels, a new time study, and updated anticipated units of service. The time study conducted realized significant efficiencies brought about primarily by the digitization of all aspects of the program. For example, in the past staff conducted inspections on paper and completed double entry into the division portal as well as the States'. Staff now conduct inspections on-site with tablets that upload directly to the division & State reporting systems. This has resulted in a significant decrease throughout the series.

Land Use

The land use program fees are fluctuating both up and down with an overall trend of an increase across the entire series. The anticipated units of service from the Planning & Building services land use applications were developed in collaboration with PBS for increased accuracy.