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To: <bos@mendocinocounty.org>
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Subject: Proposed Cultural Services Agency

June 5, 2018

Mendocino County
Board of Supervisors

Dear Board Members:

With this letter I must add my voice to the overwhelming public response you are receiving to abandon the ill-conceived plan of a Cultural Services Agency. I have recently retired after 24 years of service with the Mendocino County Library. In that time I managed the Round Valley Branch in its formative years of 1990-1992. I managed the headquarters in Ukiah for 10 years (1993-2001), and Willits Library for 12 years (2002-2014). It has been my honor to work closely with hundreds of volunteers, multiple Friends groups and Library Advisory Boards. During this same time I worked under 6 different Library Directors and attended uncountable City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings.

Throughout this period there have been two constants. 1.County government has had to continually step away from fiscal responsibility for the library system, even to capital expenses. 2.The public has stepped forward to fill that gap. During the economically bleak 1990s, I was one Ukiah employee with 60 volunteers. When the Board was ready to close Willits Library, the Willits Friends paid for everything from paper clips to books and computers. What finally saved our Library system was the public, first in the form of the Library Advisory Board who showed great vision in proposing Measure A, and ultimately in the public who voted over 75% to tax themselves to keep it open. What does this mean? It means that all of these groups, their donors, and the voters who are largely paying for the system have some real ownership of it. It means the Library Advisory Board who successfully passed Measure A has a deep understanding of the public's needs and attitudes and knows how to translate that into financial support. The public trusts us. The truth is the public trusts the Library more than it trusts County government. Public perception of the Board's proximity to Measure A will absolutely risk the continuation of library funding. All of these people are talking to you and telling you this CSA will not work. Listen to them. Listen to us. We know how to do this. We've done it.

We understand that for good reasons and bad Mendocino County government has been poverty stricken for decades. The public fixed our library problem. All you have to do now is leave it alone.

Sincerely,

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