



Mendocino County Farm Bureau

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Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

June 5, 2018

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010
Ukiah, CA 95482

Via Email: bos@mendocinocounty.org

RE: Support for the Mendocino County Agricultural Department's Proposed 2018-2019 Budget

Dear Chair Hamburg and Supervisors,

The Mendocino County Farm Bureau (MCFB) is a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary membership, advocacy group whose purpose is to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout the county and to find solutions to the problems facing agricultural businesses and the rural community. MCFB currently represents approximately 1100 members. MCFB requests that the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors support the proposed 2018-19 budget for the Mendocino County Agricultural Department.

MCFB appreciates that the Board of Supervisors have to make difficult decisions in regards to the county budget. In regards to the county agricultural department's budget, MCFB would like to remind the Board that the last few years have been challenging for the agricultural department. The department has transitioned through a number of Agricultural Commissioner's, the Assistant Agricultural Commissioner has been vacant, a number of traditional agricultural services have been neglected and cannabis permitting took a significant amount of staff time.

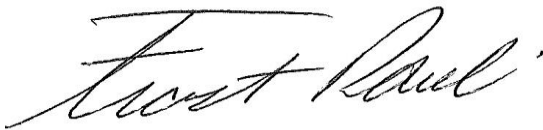
For the 2018-19 budget, the revenue for the 2017-18 budget shows some variations in income sources for the department in comparison to the proposed 2018-19 budget. The largest change is the transition of the cannabis application permit fees (\$1,079,750.00) from the 2710 budget unit for the agricultural department to the 2810 budget unit for the cannabis program. MCFB does not disagree with separating the cannabis revenue and expenses into a separate budget unit, but we wanted to bring this significant change to the Board. The other change that is quite relevant is the reduction of income related to the unclaimed off road gas tax funding. This funding is directly connected to certain services provided to the agricultural industry by the agricultural department such as pest detection, pest inspection, air quality control, education and outreach, etc. MCFB is

hopeful that our current Agricultural Commissioner, Harinder Grewal, will be able to refocus the activities of the department on some of these qualifying programs in order to return the unclaimed gas tax income back to historical levels. However, he will need time to do so and the income change may not be recognized until the 2019-20 budget.

On the expense side, with the transition of staff and related expenses from the 2710 budget unit for the agricultural department to the 2810 budget unit for the cannabis program, the overall costs related to salaries, employee benefits and other services/supplies for the agricultural department have been reduced for the proposed 2018-19 budget.

In conclusion, MCFB encourages the Board to approve the proposed 2018-19 budget for the Agricultural Department and provide the opportunity for the new agricultural commissioner to return the department to a more balanced financial state. If there are any questions regarding MCFB's comments above, please feel free to contact the MCFB office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frost Pauli".

Frost Pauli
President

CC: Carmel Angelo, Mendocino County CEO
Harinder Grewal, Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner