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Date: 5/30/2019 7:14 PM
Subject: In support of funding MCFSC

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to urge the Board of Supervisors to consider funding for the Mendocino County FireSafe Council. I am a part of our newly formed Lower Deerwood FireSafe Council, and we recently had a meeting with Megan McCluer, the head of the MCFSC. The input she has provided has been exceptional albeit "stretched thin" due to her having another full-time job, and assistant Imil Ferrera only having enough hours to work part-time. These two, who make up the MCSFC, have one of the most daunting tasks of our community; educating and assisting homeowners in improving their survival and safety in case of fire. As we now know, it is not a matter of if, but when this occurs. I could not think of a more pressing entity to fund in light of our current fire behaviors. With additional funding, Megan feels MCFSC could hire enough staff to develop their program with the end result of becoming financially independent from County funding.

After starting our neighborhood council early this year, it is clear that keeping our community safe and thriving with these new fire behavior patterns need to be on the front burner. MCFSC has been an integral component for our council to find its footing, plus providing tools for grant applications to make our community as fire safe as possible. As we have seen in recent fires, it only takes hours for a community to vanish. When I look at our neighborhood, I see so much that needs to be done (egress/ingress routes, reducing home and thoroughfare fuel loads, etc.) that it becomes overwhelming knowing where to begin. With the guidance of MCFSC, we now have a "parent" to guide us to becoming a fire safe community.

I also recently learned that Sonoma County
<<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/9632880-181/fire-safety-inspections-starting-on-rural?artslide=4>>
is starting fire safety inspections on some of their rural properties with fees against property owners failing to comply within 45 days. Brilliant! This would be a great way to encourage negligent homeowners to act NOW before fire season in our county as well.

I realize you have many other front burner items on your agenda, but frankly I cannot see of anything more pressing than preventing devastation from unruly fires on our neighborhoods and communities. Perhaps with the help of MCFSC and funding, this can be accomplished in Mendocino County. By working together, we can do this. We must do this.

Respectfully,

Sharon Stewart
Lower Deerwood FireSafe Council (cc'd to fellow council members)
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