

June 20th, 2019

From: Willits Environmental Center
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Contact: Ellen Drell
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To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Rd.
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: Establishment of the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee

Dear Chair Brown and Members of the Board;

The Willits Environmental Center is generally supportive of the Resolution to create the Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee as put forward in agenda item 4i) of the May 7th Board of Supervisors meeting.

Based on several comments from members of the Board of Supervisors and the public, and the Board's unanimous acceptance of the language regarding cultural and socio-economic diversity and inclusivity in the original Proposal, and in the structure and protocol documents, we are confident that the Supervisors are committed to appointing committee members who will represent the diversity of the County, including the County's Latino and Native American populations. We also understand that the Board agrees with the specific protocol as outlined in the structure and protocol document that the Committee will seek comments from the Tribes when specific climate action proposals are brought to the Committee and recommended to the Board of Supervisors. Given the above, and in the interests of moving forward as quickly as possible, we concur with County Counsel that the Resolution should avoid specifying certain ethnic or racial "seats" on the committee. It will be our job as citizen advocates, together with your careful deliberation once there is a pool of applicants, to create a committee that truly represents the diversity of the County.

The issue of geographic diversity is partly guaranteed by the fact that each Supervisorial District will have three members. Again, we citizens, and each Supervisor will need to consider what constitutes adequate representation within his/her District when advocating for and selecting members, especially in the Districts that cover large geographic areas.

We suggest the following minor changes to the Resolution:

1. Amend the 2nd paragraph, (the first "Whereas") to include two important expectations of Committee appointees by including the following language:

“Whereas, the Proposal recommended that Supervisors appoint a volunteer citizen-driven committee structure whose members would in turn recruit and populate volunteer citizen topical focus groups to research and develop proposals to bring to the Committee; that each Committee appointee would be expected to participate in one or more of the topical focus groups; and that Committee members share the understanding that human activities are affecting the climate.”

2. In paragraph six of the Resolution, “Now, Therefore Be It Resolved.....”, change the existing language, “to make an annual report”, to read as follows: “to make regular reports, and at minimum, an annual report”, etc. (We predict, given the urgency for action and the fact that several Focus Groups will be working on proposals, that the Committee will want to report to the Board of Supervisors, and the Board will want to hear from the Committee, more frequently than annually.)

We agree with Chair Brown that the details regarding when, where, how often and by what by-laws the Committee will operate do not need to be in the Resolution, but can be established by the Committee members themselves once those members have been appointed.

We also concur with Supervisor Williams that in order to attract serious applicants, the County should include a description of the purpose and goals of the Committee, its general structure, including the Focus Groups, and an estimate of the time and work commitment that will likely be expected of Committee members. However, rather than including this in the Resolution, we suggest that this information be provided to applicants by including a summary of the Committee’s purpose and structure on the County’s website where Boards and Commissions are listed and where applications are submitted. The County’s LAFCO listing has such a summary description accompanying the LAFCO listing. We have attached a draft “MCCAAC Purpose and Structure Summary” for this purpose for your consideration. Also attached here is a draft of a more complete description of the Committee’s goals and structure, and what the Board of Supervisors may be looking for in an applicant’s experience and interest, which we think the County should make available to applicants through a link. We recommend that the webpage also include a link to the adopted Proposal to form the committee, the approved structure and protocol document, and the Resolution creating the Committee.

The Willits Environmental Center is aware of the importance of a staff person for the Committee. However, we think that the Committee formation should go forward even though the questions of who will be hired, by what entity, at what cost, and for what specific job description remain unanswered. We feel that the answers to these questions will become clearer once the Committee is appointed, writes its bylaws and begins to delve into its work. Since the work of the Committee will be in essence to develop climate change mitigation proposals through research, outreach and collaboration with the public and other entities, the Committee will be in a better position to assist in the hiring of its staff support once it has convened. For this reason and others, we feel strongly that the Committee should be established and empowered to begin its work as soon as possible and not be delayed due to unanswered questions regarding its staff.

We agree with the majority of the Board of Supervisors’ vote to allocate \$7500 in the current budget as adequate to support the formation of the Committee at this time. These funds could be

used for improving remote conferencing equipment to facilitate members' meeting from far corners of the County when necessary, for example.

We want to thank the Board of Supervisors for agreeing to create a Climate Action Advisory Committee and we appreciate the thought and effort that has gone into working with citizens to get this Committee established. The task of the Committee, and for the County as a whole, is a challenging one. We are hoping that with the enthusiasm and talents of a citizen-driven Committee and Focus Groups, the support and encouragement of the Board of Supervisors, and with all of us approaching this task in a spirit of experimentation and adventure, we will reach goals that we could not reach alone. Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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