

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I realize that with COVID-19; the county is in an unprecedented time of quickly falling revenues and unanticipated increased costs. Budget cuts and many difficult choices will have to be made. However, please do not consider a cut to the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council. Under the leadership of Scott Cratty, I have been impressed with the efforts for fuel-reduction and support for Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils. When I lived on Black Bart Trail, the MCFSC was instrumental in assisting our neighborhood in establishing one of the first councils and it has been very effective. We organized a couple of years before the #BlackFire in 2015 and while we did suffer loss of homes; overall, I am convinced we fared much better due to the organization of our neighborhood council. I felt confident about the work I did around my home to help protect it in a wildfire; but I also felt I was supporting the Fire Department and first responders so their job, in case of fire, might be more manageable if I did my preparations before fire season. With fire season as our next imminent (annual) threat; now is not the time to cut funds to help protect our communities. I now live on the Westside of Ukiah and, of course, I look at the Western Hills and wonder, as we all do, what will happen when it finally catches fire. Hopefully, we have done as much as possible to mitigate the threat to property and life. I also fear for the Rogina Heights area and I hope they are getting organized and prepared. Thanks for your consideration of this important issue. I wish you all the very best in your budget deliberations.

Best, Karen Christopherson

Ukiah CA