

To the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors,

June 8th, 2020

It is our understanding that the current \$100,000 funding for the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (**MCFSC**) may be slashed to \$25,000 as per the draft County of Mendocino budget for year 2020-2021. As citizens who have been very involved in the community fire safe movement we strongly feel that considering a decrease in funding for the MCFSC is negligent.

Three years ago, with devastating fires on the rise, our community looked at the hillsides, their neighborhoods and properties in concern. Neighborhoods organized and met the requests of local officials and Cal Fire to be fire safe and harden their homes and today we are in a *MUCH* better position than we ever have been.

At that time MCFSC was functioning in diminished capacity - yet became the needed center for this work - and rose to the challenge. Today, with Scott Cratty as the Executive Director, it is primed to continue the important work of supporting fire safe councils and ensuring our community does not lapse back into a complacent state in regards to the risk of wildfire.

MCFSC has been highly instrumental in supporting our Western Hills Fire Safe Council (WHFSC) in becoming an established council that includes approximately 650 residences in the western hills. We are focused on fire and emergency protection measures for home hardening and landscape defensibility of our residences as well as protection for the City of Ukiah. MCFSC has supported the WHFSC through monthly meetings that provide the latest in protection measures and connection with other fire safe councils, pamphlet distribution, grants that include limbing trees and clearing of brush at residences, vegetation management of roads, and chipper days for continued landscape vegetation management.

Our neighborhood council, part of the greater Western Hills Fire Safe Council, sits at the top of Standley, Perkins, Church and Clay street. Anyone on the West side out walking is familiar with how overgrown the hills were three years ago and how far they have come to providing true protection in the event of a fire. We have been direct beneficiaries of the MCFSC work and organizing and have utilized their programs to clear our hillsides. As working parents with three children and caretakers of our own parents - there is no way we could have done this important work to protect our neighborhood without them.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, we understand there has to be a reallocation of finances. However, it is important that the MCFSC remain viable for providing the latest fire safety information and continue to meet with all the County fire safe councils.

We request that the Board provide the ***FULL*** \$100,000 to the MCFSC in year 2020-2021 for operations to continue and even develop and to retain Scott Cratty, as the Executive Director of the MCFSC.

We can not diminish the preventive measures taken by the MCFSC, or all of the neighborhood fire safe councils that depend on them, because Covid-19 seems like the bigger need. These funds must remain stable so that our community stays as engaged as years past in protecting our lands and preparing for the threats of wildfires. We can not risk the potential disaster (physical and financial) from wildfire on top of the disaster of Covid-19. Please do not compromise on this - our communities remain at risk and \$100,000k in funding is a small amount of effective seed money for a great deal of prevention work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tracy and Ferdinand Thieriot