

Dear Board of Supervisors for Mendocino County,

I am writing with concern about the budget cut being proposed for the Mendocino Fire Safe Council. Given the current drought and pandemic, the challenge of mitigating wildfire this season is going to be especially great. It is going to be tough just to raise public awareness about wildfire given the current focus on health, jobs, racial injustice, and lack of national leadership. The MFSC plays a vital role in raising such awareness and bringing people together to solve problems on the local level. In Anderson Valley, for example, it has inspired neighborhood fuel reduction work, water supply systems, and plans to assist nearby seniors if evacuation is required. By encouraging such volunteer engagement, it is a remarkably cost effective organization. I appreciate that our county budgets are more strained than usual, but now more than ever before we need to keep our population preparing for wildfire. The currently proposed budget cut will clearly limit the capacity of the Mendocino Fire Safe Council to mobilize our communities. I hope that you will reconsider.

Sincerely,

Ron Gester