



Date July 12, 2020

Re: *Support of agenda item 5f on Streamlining the Business License Process and Amend Regulations contained in Title 6 of County Code*

To the Board of Supervisors,

I wish to acknowledge the work each of you is doing in your community to keep the citizens of our County healthy and safe. You along with the executive staff and public health officials continue to do your best to safeguard our community from the detrimental effects of this global pandemic. I want to also acknowledge that early on, public health officials and the Executive office saw the impact this pandemic would have on our local rural economy. West Business Development Center is honored to work with the County teams to design processes that allowed local small businesses to have a voice in the development of protocols and plans.

**Board of Directors**

Paul Garza, Jr.

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We are now 145 days into this pandemic and there is no end in sight. "Business as Usual" is no longer an option for our nation, our State, and our local County. New and bold processes must be developed and implemented swiftly if we hope to have our economy rebound over the next decade. One path to this recovery is to foster entrepreneurship and business growth. Because of this, I am in support of agenda item 5f on Streamlining the Business License Process and Amend Regulations contained in Title 6 of County Code, which comes to the Board on July 14, 2020.

As a nonprofit West Business Development Center serves over 500 businesses each year with no-cost business counseling. We know directly how hard it is to do business in Mendocino County and we support intelligent ways to lower barriers for businesses to launch and expand. The next 12 months are pivotal to the economic outcomes in our county over the next 10 years.

We urge you to consider and approve:

- Eliminating all double-department processes that slow business growth.
- Modernizing the language for all application forms and instructional materials relating to business licensing and permits
- Lower licensing and permits fees (consider eliminate fees during COVID)
- Implement every avenue of online mobile platform use to secure all licenses and permits
- Pilot an ombudsman program to lighten the workload for building and planning and accelerate launch/expansion of businesses
- Improve the data collection that will support ongoing growth for our businesses
- Revise county business ordinance by partnering with diverse business leaders

After health safety, accelerating our economic recovery must be the primary focus of our communities. From the Economic Injury Survey, we have seen within just 500 business over \$40 million has been lost and 1500 jobs eliminated. Many more businesses today have permanently closed their doors. Lack of effective collaboration and communication between the government and the private sector hinders the development of Mendocino's economy. Our hope is for the first step to streamline and reevaluation of ordinances becomes a facilitator to spur economic growth.

West Business Development Center has served businesses for over 30 years in Mendocino county. We will continue to support and lead in a collaborative effort to see our county thrive in the decade ahead.

Sincerely,

*Paul Garza Jr.*

Paul Garza Jr.  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
West Business Development Center

*M. Petrillo*

Mary Anne Petrillo  
Chief Executive Officer  
West Business Development Center