

Dear Supervisors:

It is well-known that Mendocino County residents continue to face risks from wildfire. Out of control vegetation growth - tall weeds, dry grasses, fallen branches, or other overgrowth - poses a significant safety hazard when they become dry fuel for fire to consume. Many properties contain dead trees from past wildfires.

Even with the existence of Fire Safe Councils, some residents - or absentee land owners - are not responsible property owners and refuse to alleviate potentially hazardous conditions to maintain their property throughout the year. Even though County Fire Departments and CalFire may have the ability to notify non compliant property owners, they lack the authority to abate privately owned lands. That's when we local residents then turn to the County for enforcement!

Adopting a Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Ordinance can require property owners to remove combustible fuel within the unincorporated areas of the County. Under such an Ordinance, any parcels not fully compliant with the Ordinance's standards - including partially cleared parcels - can be abated by the County most likely at a significantly higher cost than a land owner hiring a private contractor.

Additionally, an effective Ordinance can ensure greater due diligence and encourage greater compliance by property owners to clear hazardous properties and provide the County with the tools needed to recover abatement costs.

We have begun to dread fire season and being at the ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. It is critical to have the best management practices and available science to address risks, and for the County to have legal authority to address hazardous conditions to protect health and safety on rural lands within its jurisdiction prone to wildfires.

Please make consideration, writing and adoption of such an Ordinance a high priority so non compliant property owners won't place all of us at risk of life and property.

Thank you for your consideration.

/s/ Ted and Carole Hester