



**Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council**

PO Box 243 Redwood Valley 95470

August 14, 2021

Mendocino County  
Board of Supervisors

Re: PG&E Settlement Funds allocation, BOS Meeting 8/17/21 Agenda item 4f

Dear Supervisors Gjerde, Haschak, McGourty, Mulheren and Williams,

We, the members of the Redwood Valley MAC, representing the people of Redwood Valley, hope that we can all agree that the PG&E Settlement Funds only came about because Redwood Valley, and to a lesser extent Potter Valley, burned in October 2017. Hundreds of homes were lost. Nine people died. The trauma lives on in our communities.

We hope that we can all agree that the purpose of the PG&E Settlement Funds is to address the physical and emotional harm caused to these two communities. The only reason the money was sent to the county is that neither Redwood Valley nor Potter Valley are incorporated. We hope that we can all agree that this money should first and foremost address the impacts of that fire to the communities that suffered. Only after those needs are met should the money go to general emergency preparedness for the county, other county priorities, or funding for agencies and organizations that benefit the county at large.

We hope we can all agree that completely unrelated budget items, and items for which there are other sources of funding, should not come out of the PG&E Settlement Funds. The most egregious example of an unrelated item is *Carbon Reduction \$1,500,000* (a new line item since the Board discussed this issue publicly, and therefore possibly a violation of the Brown Act). An example of a budget item where other sources of funding are available is *Solar Panels and Batteries for Libraries \$500,000* which our District 1 Supervisor tells us should be funded by drought emergency monies.

It is both insult and injury to the people who lost so much in that fire and live with the trauma every day to treat these funds as if they are a windfall to the County. Make no mistake, Redwood Valley and Potter Valley have unmet needs to recover from this tragic disaster caused by PG&E's negligence. Until Redwood Valley and Potter Valley are made whole, it is inappropriate and unethical to spend these funds elsewhere.

It seems that you completely disregarded the Redwood Valley MAC's letter of May 14, 2021. The funding requests we made in that letter reflect the outcome of community meetings with our District 1 Supervisor Glenn McGourty and District 2 Supervisor Mulheren. Here are some excerpts from that letter detailing our funding requests which were completely ignored or insufficiently funded:

- "...the MAC strongly opposes funds going to projects throughout the County, as the **funds should mitigate problems caused by the fire in Redwood and Potter Valleys.**"

- “Water Security:...**Install and fill water storage tanks with pump capability for fire apparatus; Improve Willow Water District hookup with Redwood Valley Water District...**”
- “Evacuation Needs: Funding to Department of Transportation to provide evacuation egress, specifically:
  - Tomki Road to be passable to Willits: 2 lanes paved areas, bridges, side brush cleared
  - Road B: widen 1-way bridge and widen 1-way area
  - East Road, West Road, Laughlin Way: mow brush along roads
  - Road improvements on Road I, Colony Drive, and Road E in Redwood Valley
- “Redwood Valley Grange is an evacuation site: **Needs commercial kitchen, ADA upgrades, and a heating/cooling system; Provide charging stations for cell phones.**”
- “Survival Preparation: **Funding to drop and remove dead burned standing trees from private and public properties (severe fire hazard)**”

We respectfully requested you to fund these items and were largely denied. Now we demand that you revise the funding proposal as addressed in the following four categories:

### 1. Remove from the proposal:

a. *Mendocino County Library: Purchase & Install (Solar Panels & Batteries \$500,000)* — other funding source already identified

b. *Mendocino County Planning & Building Services Department (Reimburse for Permits & Staff Time from 2017 Disaster \$412,899)* — The only permits that were waived were for people whose homes burned to park trailers on their property while they rebuilt. The County has more than recouped any lost income or staff time through the increase in property taxes on these parcels since rebuilding.

c. *Carbon Reduction \$1,500,000*—This has absolutely nothing to do with the 2017 Fire or fire/emergency response or preparedness in general; further, it was not on the funding list at the last BOS meeting and is therefore a Brown Act violation by the CEO’s Office and/or whoever was involved in adding it to the list without public process.

### 2. Clarify or remove from the proposal:

a. *Mendocino County Department of Transportation: Roads and Bridges Repair \$1,400,318* — This should specifically fund Redwood Valley and Potter Valley egress improvements (starting with this list):

- Tomki Road to be passable to Willits: 2 lanes paved areas, bridges, side brush cleared
- Road B: widen 1-way bridge and widen 1-way area
- East Road, West Road, Laughlin Way: mow brush along roads
- Road improvements on Road I, Colony Drive, and Road E in Redwood Valley

b. *Mendocino County Facilities & Information Services: Park Hazards Mitigation \$400,000* — This needs to specify Mariposa County Park or other parks in Redwood Valley or Potter Valley. Otherwise this item needs to be removed from the proposal.

### 3. Add to the proposal or increase funding for these items:

a. *Resource Conservation District Mendocino County: Funding to cover property owners’ 50% matching funds requirement for removal of burned/hazardous trees \$3,000,000 (in addition to funds already listed for MCRCD)* — These dead trees are hazardous tinder for the next fire and they serve as a traumatic reminder of the fire. Fire victims should not have to bear the cost personally and most simply cannot.

b. *Redwood Valley Grange: Funding to cover repairs to building and installation of a commercial*

*kitchen \$550,000* — The Grange is a critical community resource. It served as an emergency resource center after the 2017 wildfire. It provides space for community meetings and is a place people can go during emergencies to find family members, charge their phones and/or seek other resources. The building is 100 years old and in need of many upgrades. A commercial kitchen will support its ability to serve the community including providing much needed economic opportunity for small food manufacturers.

b. *Redwood Valley County Water District: Funding to cover costs of annexing to Russian River Flood Control District \$750,000 (in addition to funds already listed for RVCWD)* — This is critical for Redwood Valley water security. It should only be funded from PG&E Settlement Funds if another funding source (e.g. Drought Emergency funds) cannot be found.

c. *Redwood Valley County Water District: Funding to stabilize district and secure their ability to provide water to Redwood Valley including purchase and installation of water tanks and improvement to the intertie with Willow County Water District \$3,000,000 (in addition to funds already listed for RVCWD)* — This is critical for Redwood Valley water security and consequently fire safety and reduction of fear/trauma.

*Mendocino County Department of Transportation: Roads and Bridges Repair \$1,400,318* — Should fund only these Redwood Valley projects with the allocated amount:

- “Evacuation Needs: Funding to Department of Transportation to provide evacuation egress, specifically:
  - a. Tomki Road to be passable to Willits: 2 lanes paved areas, bridges, side brush cleared
  - b. Road B: widen 1-way bridge and widen 1-way area
  - c. East Road, West Road, Laughlin Way: mow brush along roads
  - d. Road improvements on Road I, Colony Drive, and Road E in Redwood Valley

**4. Put these request requests to the back of the list, behind the requests for Redwood Valley and Potter Valley...because the PG&E Settlement Funds should first and foremost mitigate impacts of the 2017 wildfire and strengthen, repair and promote healing in the communities that suffered.**

a. *Mendocino Fire Safe Council (\$1,400,000)* — Although this is an important organization for future fire prevention and preparedness, we should seek other sources of funding.

b. *Coastal Valley Emergency Medical Services (\$2,567,603)* — Although this is a critical organization related to general emergency response, we should seek other sources of funding.

c. *Mendocino County Sheriff Office (Emergency Operations Center \$2,044,000)* — Although our Sheriff’s Office is critical to emergency preparedness and response and they need an EOC, the County must fund the Sheriff’s Office and its requirements from tax revenue or other funding sources.

d. *The Community Foundation of Mendocino County (Distastes Fund for Future Disasters \$500,000)* — Although this is an important organization related to emergency response, it makes no sense to set aside funding for future disasters when Redwood Valley and Potter Valley still have unmet disaster recovery needs.

e. *Mendocino County Facilities & Information Services (Microwave & Radio Communications, Sheriff Station 1 Wiring only—will address other parts separately)* — Although these are critical projects related to general emergency preparedness and response, we should seek other sources of funding.

f. *Mendocino County Facilities & Information Services (Disaster Recovery Planning and Site Implementation only—will address other parts separately)* — Although these are critical projects related to general emergency preparedness and response, we should seek other sources of funding.

g. *Equipment for fire departments other than Redwood Valley or Potter Valley (Brooktrails Fire Department: Polaris UTV Side-by-side Rescue Vehicles \$120,000)*

h. *Equipment for other agencies/organizations (United Disaster Relief of Northern California -*

*Disaster Resource Center - Forklift \$10,0000)*

We urge you to vote no on this agenda item or postpone the vote in a manner that a more robust public discourse may be had.

Very Sincerely,

Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council

Members:

Dolly Riley (chair)

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Katrina Frey (Treasurer)

Chris Boyd

Sattie Clark

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