



Mendocino County

Legislation Text

File #: 20-0634, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Brown

Meeting Date: July 21, 2020

Department Contact: Supervisor Brown

Phone: 463-4221

Item Type: Regular Agenda

Time Allocated for Item: 15 Min.

Agenda Title:

Discussion and Possible Action Including Direction to Staff to Author a Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Ordinance
(Sponsor: Supervisor Brown)

Recommended Action/Motion:

Provide direction to staff to write a Hazardous Vegetation and Rubbish Abatement Ordinance.

Previous Board/Board Committee Actions:

No previous action has been taken, however, at past meetings the question has been raised regarding abatement authority on private lands where the owner has insufficient defensible space.

Summary of Request:

Mendocino County's residents continue to face risks from wildfire. Each year during the rains, vegetation can quickly grow out of control. Tall weeds, dry grasses, fallen branches and other overgrowth can pose a significant safety hazard when they become dry fuel for fire to consume. Dead trees from past wildfires also remain on many properties.

Fire Safe Councils (FSC) within communities throughout Mendocino County have organized and work very hard to eliminate vegetative fuels within and near their residential areas, and on roadsides. Other communities without organized FSC depend on neighbors to properly manage their land. Unfortunately 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. County Fire Departments and Cal Fire may have the ability to notify noncompliant property owners but lack the authority to abate privately owned lands. Local residents then turn to the County for enforcement.

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 that are 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. Overall, an effective ordinance can ensure greater due diligence and encourage greater compliance by property owners to clear hazardous properties; and additionally provide the County with the tools needed to adequately recover its costs for abatement.

Increasing wildfire probability continues to pose major risks to residents, the local economy, and ecosystems. It is critical to use best management practices and available science to address risks. It is also critical for the County to have the ability to prevent hazardous conditions to protect public health and safety on rural lands within its jurisdiction prone to wildfires.

Grant funding may be available to write an ordinance.

Alternative Action/Motion:

Take no action.

Supervisory District: All

vote requirement: Majority

Supplemental Information Available Online At: n/a

Fiscal Details:

source of funding: N/A

current f/y cost: N/A

annual recurring cost: N/A

budget clarification: N/A

budgeted in current f/y: N/A

if no, please describe:

revenue agreement: N/A

Agreement/Resolution/Ordinance Approved by County Counsel: Yes

CEO Liaison: Executive Office

CEO Review: Yes

CEO Comments:

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Executed By: Atlas Pearson, Deputy Clerk I

Date: JULY 24, 2020

Final Status: Direction Given to Staff

