



Mendocino County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-0962, Version: 1

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisor Williams

Meeting Date: August 24, 2021

Department Contact: Supervisor Williams

Phone: 4441

Item Type: Regular Agenda

Time Allocated for Item: 2 hours

Agenda Title:

Discussion and Possible Action Including Presentation Regarding Increasingly Dire Drought Conditions and Abrupt Loss of Coastal Water Sale to Haulers; and Direction to Staff to Allocate Budget for Immediate Assistance Including the Implementation of a Water Hauling Assistance Program, Structured for Best Success in Future Reimbursement from State and Federal Partners
(Sponsor: Supervisor Williams)

Recommended Action/Motion:

Accept presentation regarding increasingly dire drought conditions and abrupt loss of coastal water sale to haulers; and direct staff to allocate budget for immediate assistance including the implementation of a water hauling assistance program, structured for best success in future reimbursement from State and Federal partners.

Previous Board/Board Committee Actions:

The Board of Supervisors declared a Local Drought Emergency on April 20, 2021.

County formed the Mendocino County Drought Task Force consisting of Supervisors Haschak and McGourty.

The Drought Task Force met with the Mendocino City Community Service District in June, when MCCSD explained the urgency of the situation. The county has been able to secure 6 port-a-potties to reduce water demands within the town, but mitigation efforts alone will not address the magnitude of dwindling water supply.

On August 17, 2021, the Drought Task force expressed optimism in regard to coastal water hauling potential.

Summary of Request:

Within 24 hours of the August 17, 2021 BoS meeting, Supervisor Williams became aware of imminent halting of offsite water sales from Elk, Irish Beach, Mendocino Unified School District and Westport, leaving coast residents and businesses without the ability to purchase water. Restaurants and hotels have begun cancelling reservations and closing a few nights per week due to the shortage of drinking water. The town of Mendocino has become the epicenter of acute drought crisis, but residents across our rural landscape are not immune to

dry wells.

Water Operator Charlie Acker said, “never seen it this bad, there is no flow in Greenwood Creek” and he was here for the historic drought of 1976-77. Fort Bragg discontinued water sales on July 18, 2021. Westport will stop their two loads per day sales any minute. The coast is now left without an affordable place to purchase water.

Last week, Mendocino Volunteer Fire Department responded to a mutual aid request for a fire in Ukiah. Firefighters left their jobs and families, raced to the station and drove a water tender full of water from drought stricken Mendocino to Ukiah. Like fire, drought requires application of pooled resources.

Ryan Rhoades, Mendocino City Community Services District, will describe current conditions and immediate needs within the town of Mendocino.

Howard Dashiell, Director of Department of Transportation, will present short term concerns of all impacted communities.

Josh Metz, Drought Task Force staff, will share regulatory hurdles in regard to moving water from one basin to another.

Darcie Antle, Assistant CEO, will share possible grants, ARPA funding options/limitations, remaining PG&E funds and general fund options.

Supervisors should be prepared to discuss business, agricultural and domestic use as well as the county’s role in providing assistance. The town of Mendocino generates millions of county dollars per year through sales tax and transient occupancy tax (bed tax). Inaction will result in lost revenue and impact wage earners, the very people who have recently transitioned from post-COVID sheltering unemployment to the workforce. The crisis at hand demands State and Federal assistance, but the local economy and public welfare require immediate action which only the county can provide. While the town of Mendocino is leading acute symptoms of drought, it is anticipated other communities will follow. The board should provide clear guidance to staff and set public expectations. If adequate assistance cannot or will not be provided, guidance will allow residents and businesses can plan accordingly.

Time is of the essence. We must transition from brainstorming to action.

Alternative Action/Motion:

Advise public that county will not provide financial assistance.

How Does This Item Support the General Plan? N/A

Supervisory District: All

vote requirement: Majority

Supplemental Information Available Online At: N/A

Fiscal Details:

source of funding: N/A

current f/y cost: \$1-3M

annual recurring cost: N/A

budget clarification: N/A

budgeted in current f/y: N/A

if no, please describe: N/A

revenue agreement: N/A

Agreement/Resolution/Ordinance Approved by County Counsel: N/A

CEO Liaison: Executive Office

CEO Review: Yes

CEO Comments:

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Executed By: Atlas Pearson, Deputy Clerk I

Final Status:**No Action Taken**

Date: August 26, 2021

