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Westport Municipal Advisory Council

P. O. Box 307, Westport, CA 95488
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June 12, 2015

Dan Gjerde
Supervisor, District 4, Mendocino County
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Dan,

The Board of Supervisors meeting on April 21st included two very important agenda items, each with significant public input. The two items were closely related, one focused on fire safety and the other on fire danger. The primary take aways on the fire safety issue were that it has been ten years since the last Community Wildfire Protection Plan review, and that the majority of Mendocino County fire departments are underfunded for their mission. In the case of fire danger, the primary take away was that dealing with fire danger is an extremely complex issue with both safety and economic issues being exacerbated by the extended drought conditions affecting all of California. The problem is large and the stakeholder group is large; residents, property owners (both private and commercial), fire services (local and CalFire), forest workers, and County and State agencies.

Over the years WMAC has had multiple meetings where these topics were brought up. The WMAC Board believes these issues are important to and urgent for our local Sphere of Influence; however, we do not have the knowledge or resources to effectively pursue solutions. The WMAC Directors see the current level of community interest created by the recent BoS meetings as an opportunity to take collective action on a county level.

The WMAC Board encourages and supports the BoS to take steps to bring representatives of the affected stakeholders together with sufficient resources to meet about, discuss and propose solutions for the fire safety and fire danger topics introduced at the April 21st meeting. WMAC wishes to be an active participant in any activity developed to pursue this objective.

One action that seems to have high priority and possible impact with little controversy is the review and updating of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The stakeholders include most if not all of those affected by the broader issues. Westport has two groups interested in supporting and participating in work on a CWPP update, the WMAC and the Westport Volunteer Fire Department.

This matter was considered and the contents of this letter were approved at a public meeting held by the WMAC on June 2, 2015. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. Please inform us of any related activity initiated or known of by the BoS by contacting Bill Knapp at bill@netwidget.com or 964-7355.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bill Knapp in blue ink.

Bill Knapp, Secretary

Handwritten signature of Thad M. Van Bueren in blue ink.

Thad M. Van Bueren, Chairman

cc: Board of Supervisors