LWV®

The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

Empowering voters, defending democracy

Charlene McAllister, President | November 2026 | Jary Stavely and Dorine Real, Editors

November members' meeting

Where Are We Now?

Zoom from home

Tuesday November 17 6:00 pm

CLICK HERE to join

League Plans Open Discussion on November Election Results

The public is invited to join League members on November 17 at 6 pm on Zoom for an evaluation of the Mid-Term Election results. In addition to reviewing specific outcomes, we can ask ourselves questions like:

- What is the League's role in the current situation?
- What are the implications concerning "polarization"?
- What was the role of money in this election, and what should we do about it?
- How can we individually and as a League support our representatives in rebuilding democratic institutions?
- How can we reinforce norms and customs of dialogue and cooperation?
- What in our system of democratic government needs to be revised, and is now the time?

Look for more information in the next two weeks. Please share your own ideas of topics or questions to consider in an email to voter@mcn.org. Let's think about our democracy together!

Calendar

November 2 (Monday)
Deadline for comments on census rule changes ▼

November 3 (Tuesday) United States
Election Day

November 17 (Tuesday) 6:00 Zoom
LWVMC member meeting: election evaluation discussion

November 19 (Monday) 5:00 Coast Hospital
MCHCD meeting, discussing retrofit financing ▼
3:00 - 5:00 Zoom
LCP Update Review

▼ *Click this symbol to go to the relevant article*

The public is welcome at these events. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

In this issue ...

Where Are We Now?
Vote and Be Healthy
Last-Minute Election Information
Candidate Forums
No Kings Day
Local Election Heroes
Coastal Stories
Mendocino County News
State News Briefs
California League Resources
LWVUS and the Midterms
More LWVUS News
County Sea Level Rise Policies
LWVMC Information

Click these entries to jump to the articles.

Vote and Be Healthy



by Charlene McAllister

Your vote is your voice. In the face of all that is happening, it can feel, at times, too big for our own lives and actions to matter. But we do. As citizens, voting is how we choose to be part of forming the future and protecting our way of life. It is also an opportunity to get to know who you are voting for. And the first step to figuring out your choices is finding out what you stand for. Voting gives you a way to put your values into action.

The American Medical Association passed a resolution in 2022 that declared voting to be a social determinant of health. In other words, this resolution points to a high correlation between voting and longer life expectancies, better incomes, better education, and a better general quality of life. If you believe in the power of choice, then make sure you vote.

Last-Minute Election Information

Candidate Forums

See the separate article below on candidate forums and how to view them. —ed.

Drop Boxes and Polling Places

If you haven't voted yet, experts advise that it is too late to use the U.S. Postal Service. It is best to use the county's drop boxes in Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Boonville, and Covelo, or to bring it to your precinct polling place before 8 pm on Tuesday, November 3. A list of polling places and drop box locations is on the Mendocino County website. An Oct. 10 Ukiah Daily Journal article by Justine Frederiksen reports County Clerk Katrina Bartolomie's statement about her preference for voters to use drop boxes.

Propositions

The recording of the Sonoma/Marin County League's Ballot Propositions Pros and Cons is now available online via YouTube. CalMatters offers several informative articles about the propositions on its website, including background on the bond measures being proposed, differing views on how Prop 46 would affect housing, and a last-minute guide to the 14 referendums on the ballot. Elise Cox wrote about her Oct. 12 CalMatters proposition presentation at Fort Bragg's Town Hall in her MendoLocal article, Fort Bragg Proposition Workshop Reveals Facts Hidden in the Fine Print. Another examination of the propositions was held by Karen Ottoboni and Annie Esposito on KZYX; to listen, go to jukebox.kzyx.org, and scroll down to "Proposition Show …" on October 12 at 6 pm. The California League also provides both recommendations and unbiased analysis on its website, and now offers its recommendations in Spanish.

Judges

There are no shortcuts for information about the state court judges on the ballot. Charlene McAllister offers this advice on the Mendocino League Facebook page: "Questions about voting for judges come up every election. Here are a few things to consider. Judges must deal with everything from minor disputes to society's most intractable problems. Judges are expected to decide cases as they think the facts and law require without regard to their personal view on the issue and without bending to public or political pressures. Look for impartiality, commitment to the law, and campaign conduct that is consistent with judicial rules and ethics. Look for demonstrated exposure to legal issues and a substantial and diverse experience."

The Santa Clara League also offers information about making judge decisions.

Polling Place Electioneering

On October 6, at the suggestion of County Clerk Katrina Bartolomie, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution extending the area in which electioneering is prohibited, from the current 100 feet to 200 feet from the entrance of a building that contains a polling place, an elections official's office, a satellite location, or an outdoor site at which a voter may cast or drop off a ballot. California Elections Code section 319.5 defines electioneering as "the visible display or audible dissemination of information that advocates for or against any candidate or measure on the ballot". The Board of Supervisors' Resolution can be found online.

Correction

The League's Vote411 election guide does not include information on the finances behind candidates and ballot measures. In our Last *Voter*, we erroneously stated that it does. We regret the error. The CalMatters Voter Guide presents extensive financing information.

Candidate Forums



Fort Bragg City Council

The Mendocino League of Women Voters held a forum for Fort Bragg City Council candidates on October 1. It was recorded, and may be viewed on You Tube and on Facebook. Roger Coryell wrote an article about it for the Mendocino Voice.

Photos: Eric Fingal



Ukiah Area Races

On October 6 in collaboration with the League, the Mendocino Women's Political Coalition held a series of candidate forums covering races for Ukiah City Council, the Ukiah Unified School District, the County School Board District 1, and the First Congressional District. The 3½-hour recording is available on You Tube. A Ukiah Daily Journal article by Austin Murphy focusses on the interaction between congressional candidates Mike McGuire and James Gallagher, which was the final forum of the session. The Mendocino Voice also conducted written interviews with all the Ukiah City Council candidates except Mia Uribe about what they see as the city's biggest challenges.

September Willits Event

As we reported last month, the League worked with several Willits civic groups to hold an all-purpose forum on September 20, with candidates for 3rd District Supervisor, the Willits Unified School District board, and the Willits City Council all appearing. It may be still be viewed online.

No Kings Day

On October 17 the League participated in No Kings: Vote Early events across the country. In Fort Bragg Charlene McAllister provided registration and election information at a League table. In Ukiah, Scott Miller hosted a barbecue for Vote Early advocates before they joined the Pumpkinfest parade. Carole Press and three others represented the League in Willits. Dorine Real reported ten participants in tiny Westport.





< In Fort Bragg, photo by Bob Dominy ^ In Ukiah

For a national perspective, here is part of Heather Cox Richardson's account, provided to us by Mary Rose Kaczorowski: "Around the United States of America and the world, people gathered today at more than 3,000 No Kings: Vote Early events to encourage Americans to vote in the November 3 midterm elections. The events were designed to encourage people to vote early to ensure their votes are counted in an election where the president and his party have made it clear they intend to silence their opponents.

"Since Trump launched the Big Lie that he had been cheated of victory in the 2020 presidential election by voter fraud, Republican-dominated state legislatures have restricted access to the vote. Although it is already illegal for non-citizens to vote in federal elections and such votes are vanishingly rare, Trump and his allies are insisting that states must restrict the vote to prevent voter fraud. According to the Brennan Center, which works to protect voting rights, in 2021 at least 19 states passed 32 laws to make voting more difficult. Since the 2024 election, 22 states have passed 47 laws that restrict the vote.

"As Bob Ortega of CNN reported yesterday, states have closed polling places in Black and Latino districts, required new paperwork to vote, reduced early voting, and restricted the use of student IDs for voter identification. Celina Stewart, the chief executive officer of the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization that works to expand access to the vote, told Ortega: 'In 17 years of working on voting rights, I have never seen such a widespread and coordinated effort to restrict access to the ballot.'"

League Honors

Local Election Heroes

On October 20, in collaboration with the Mendocino Women's Political Coalition, the Mendocino League celebrated Election Heroes Day by bringing a home-made chocolate cake to the County Elections Office staff with letters of appreciation from President Charlene McAllister and Voter Services Chair Pat Dunbar. League Vice-President Scott Miller presented the cake and commendations. Afterwards, Scott and MWPC representatives shared their appreciation for County Clerk Katrina Bartolomie and her staff at the Board of Supervisors meeting in Ukiah. A Ukiah Daily Journal article by Carol Brodsky telling about the impromptu party contains a photo and the texts of both letters. Scott's presentation to the Board of Supervisors, including subsequent remarks from the MWPC representatives, is on You Tube (five minutes into the meeting).

The U.S. League is the managing partner of national Election Hero Day. "At a time when election workers face growing political pressure, threats, and misinformation, their commitment to serving voters has never been more important. Across the country, these dedicated public servants are preparing polling places, processing ballots, answering voters' questions, and ensuring that every eligible voter has the opportunity to make their voice heard on November 3." The complete LWVUS press release is on its website.

Coastal Stories

Laboratory Open House

On October 18 the Noyo Center for Marine Science celebrated the completion of its new laboratory on the Noyo Headlands with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, an auction, and public viewing. The new lab, designed to accommodate the articulation of the 73-foot blue whale skeleton the organization has in its keeping, is the first structure to be approved and built on the former lumber mill site. Carol Brodsky reported on the event for the Ukiah Daily Journal.

Kelp Restoration Makes Progress, But …

A presentation at the Kelpfest celebration on October 10 reported significant gains in the local bull kelp population, while highlighting challenges posed by this winter's El Niño-enhanced storms. Elise Cox's article about the report begins this way:

"Off the Mendocino Coast where vast beds of purple urchins once thrived, kelp is recovering faster than nearby reefs left alone. Researchers told a Kelpfest audience Saturday that the kelp canopy at Big River jumped more than 900% between its 2023 low and fall 2025, bringing it back near 2022 levels. Noyo Harbor reached its historical kelp levels a full year before it could be said. And despite warming waters this summer, researchers said they were glad the restored kelp did not lose ground. The question hanging over the festival, which runs through Monday in Mendocino and Fort Bragg, is whether those gains can last. The super El Niño predicted by some forecasts could bring even warmer water. In August, state scientists warned lawmakers that warming could stall kelp recovery for years and cost the region its Dungeness crab season this winter." The full story is online.

Coast Hospital Retrofit Plan Proceeds

from an Oct. 10 MCHCD press release

The Mendocino Coast Health Care District Board has approved a resolution authorizing a financing team to seek proposals from banks and other lenders for potential tax-exempt financing of required seismic improvements at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast Hospital. No new taxes on District residents are being proposed as part of this financing approach. The state-mandated seismic retrofit of the Mendocino Coast hospital is estimated to cost approximately $20 million. The District is exploring borrowing for the project while preserving its existing $18.9 million cash reserves for unexpected needs and future hospital improvements. The financing under consideration would use funds through Cal-Mortgage—along with funds for other hospital facilities improvements—to fund the project and allow construction to move forward. The expectation is that additional funds will continue on schedule, should the financing be obtained, which would then be repaid from proceeds.

This finance model aims to keep the cost manageable: if retained cash earns about 4% while the borrowing costs about 5%, the net carrying cost to the taxpayers for the retrofit improvement is roughly 1%, based on the example given. The Board will review lender proposals and a financing recommendation before deciding whether to proceed at their November 19, 2026 meeting.

Help for Rural Hospitals

According to a story by Liz Larson of the Ukiah Daily Journal, republished by Elise Cox on October 9, "Members of Congress from both parties have introduced bills to shore up rural hospitals ahead of roughly $1.3 trillion in coming cuts to Medicaid, ACA marketplaces, and SNAP set to take effect after the midterm election. The proposals include interest-free loans and reimbursement changes." The story is on the Mendo Local website.

El Niño Plus King Tides

The effect of king tides during the coming El Niño rainy season was the subject of an Oct. 22 Mendocino Voice article by Roger Coryell. "The ocean off the Mendocino County coast is already running high, and printed tide tables probably won't be 'remotely accurate' this winter, a National Weather Service meteorologist said Wednesday. Ryan Aylward, warning coordination meteorologist at the weather service office in Eureka, singled out the king tides that come right before Thanksgiving and Christmas as 'windows of concern.' The reason is 'the horrible timing.' 'A big storm during one of those king tides,' he said, 'could be either phone interview. 'It could be very impactful because we've already added an extra foot on top.'" The article is online, along with information from a recent UC Davis study of how high-tide storms could affect coastal areas along the whole California coast, with several photos of vulnerable areas in Mendocino County.

Millsite Contamination Cleanup Plan Questioned

California's Department of Toxic Substances Control has sent Mendocino Railway's plan for cleaning up the contaminated ponds at the former Georgia-Pacific mill site back for a re-write, and said it will follow up separately to make sure the railway fixes the fence around Pond 8, which the agency found "primitive, and frequently breached." On October 3 Elise Cox reported on DTSC's August letter in reply to the landowner's "Feasibility Study Addendum" which weighed options for the cleanup of dioxins and other pollutants remaining in the area under consideration. Details and contact may be found on the Mendo Local website.

The Next LCP Update Review

The GrassRoots Institute Mendocino Vision Workgroup will host its next bimonthly coastal land use planning and management meeting on Thursday, November 19, from 3 to 5 pm on Zoom. The public is invited to participate and use this opportunity to engage in the planning and management of our coastal zone. Point Arena, Fort Bragg and the County of Mendocino have been updating their Local Coastal Programs with grants for planning and land use management, funded by grants from the California Coastal Commission. As part of that effort studies are underway in regard to land use, transportation, water, archaeological sites, coastal biology, climate change & sea level rise impacts, and coastal access and scenic view needs. Last month the Board of Supervisors adopted baseline sea level rise policies, as part of this multi-year LCP Update process. To participate, contact Peter McNamee, or get the link from the GRI Vision Group website.

Mendocino County News

Mental Health Treatment Center Opens

"A new live-in mental health treatment center in Ukiah has taken in its first residents," is the opening line of Roger Coryell's Oct. 29 story for the Mendocino Voice. The Anchor Mental Health Rehabilitation Center, on Orchard Ave. in Ukiah, has 16 beds, of which 8 are currently filled. Approximately 40 residents with mental health needs are currently being cared for outside of Mendocino County, due to the previous lack of a suitable facility. County residents with long memories may recall when voters authorized funds for meeting this need a number of years ago. The full story has details and a photo.

Data Center Moratorium

At its first meeting in October, the Board of Supervisors voted in favor of an extension to its previously approved moratorium on the creation of data centers. Roger Coryell's Mendocino Voice article has details on the measure, which is designed to keep the hold in place until a permanent ban is enacted.

Supervisors Consider County Housing Amnesty

Discussion of a specific county amnesty program for un-permitted ADU's, began during the Board of Supervisors meeting in Fort Bragg, continued at its October 20 meeting in Ukiah. Elise Cox's Mendo Local article describes the comments of the public and the county officials' reactions; it also reports on the Supes' approval of SLR policies for the county's LCP Update [see Peter McNamee's letter to the Supervisors below].

Lake Mendocino Water Improvements

On Oct. 2 article by Justine Frederiksen in the Ukiah Daily Journal describes what local water officials said about how Lake Mendocino fared through the slightly drier water year just concluded, and what to expect this winter with a strong El Niño effect predicted. A new operation system has improved how the Coyote Dam can regulate the reservoir's water supply.

Non-Citizen Voter List in Mendocino County

Katrina Bartolomie was quoted in national news stories covering the Justice Department's demand that California officials set aside ballots from "potential non-citizens" in advance of the November 3 election. She told reporters that all the people on the list given her for Mendocino County actually live in another county. The stories were published in the New York Times on October 23, and in the Election Law Blog on October 24.

State News Briefs

Reaction to Veto of State Forest Legislation

from a Mendocino Trail Stewards announcement

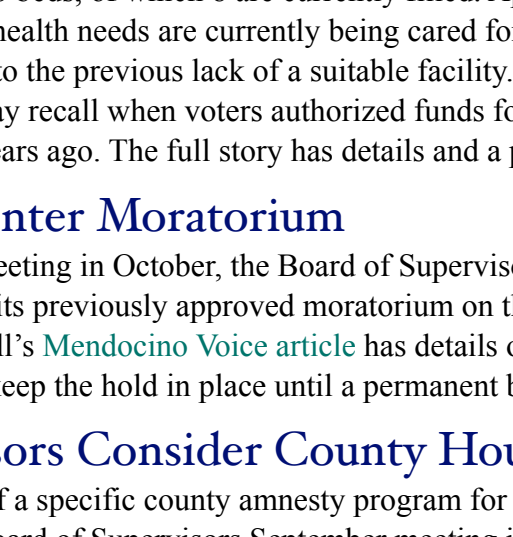
Despite overwhelming support from the legislature, Governor Newsom vetoed AB 2494, the bill to modernize the management of Jackson and all of California's "demonstration" forests. The governor's veto letter, written in an all-too-familiar greenwashed language, read as though it was copied and pasted from a list of special-interest lobbyist talking points. The governor's surprising veto was described as "nonsensical" by the bill's author, Assemblymember Chris Rogers, according to a recent LA Times article: "Current law says that the guiding principle for the management of the forests is maximum sustained production of high-quality wood products," he told The Times. "That's much more narrow as a directive on how to manage those huge lands than 'try primarily to protect biodiversity, carbon sequestration, research, recreation.'" Josephine Barrantes of the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) lays out the benefits lost from the veto in her post, Governor Vetoes AB 2494… Time will tell, but both EPIC and Rogers say they remain committed to changing the mandate for the Demonstration State Forests.

State Attempts to Preserve Access to Tribal Records

On October 16 CalMatters published an article by Amelia Schafer about a lawsuit concerning the closure of an important indigenous archive office. According to a summary by Elise Cox, "California filed a federal lawsuit Oct. 14 to block the planned closure of the San Francisco National Archives, which tribal leaders say was announced without consultation. The facility holds Bureau of Indian Affairs records—enrollment, land and federal boarding-school files—that tribes rely on to prove lineage and land claims."

Our State League

California League Resources



Our California League has taken positions on all the State measures except Prop. 40 (the "Billionaire Tax"). Advocacy has included five printed versions (from one to 37 pages) of the Vote With the League guide, including one in Spanish, and material on the LWVC website in English and Spanish. There are also lots of resources on the website and plenty of encouragement to local Leagues to oppose Prop. 39, the voter identification measure, as well as a timely press conference on October 23.

As always, LWVC Education Fund has promoted and supported voting, including early voting, through the cavotes.org website, the *Easy Voter Guide*, and Vote411.

LWVUS and the Midterms

Considering Election Concerns

The U.S. League published an article by Thomas Tai which examines fears which voters have about "the Trump administration interfering with the upcoming midterm elections. Their concern is warranted; this administration has shown little respect for the law and the Constitution. The same holds true when it comes to elections, as seen in its illegal executive order curbing mail-in ballots and its attempt to suppress the vote via its support of the SAVE Act in its various versions." The piece, a blog entry, provides information on midterm elections and voters' rights while addressing some of today's top concerns, including what would happen if ICE came to the polls or whether the administration can cancel midterms.

Also, House Democrats, led by House Administration Committee Chair Joe Morelle (D-NY) and Rep. James Walkinshaw (D-VA), held a shadow hearing on strengthening voting rights and election security with local election officials and civil rights and voting rights advocates on October 1. Among the participants were Democracy Forward President and CEO Skye Perryman, NAACP Virginia State Conference President Rev. Cozy Bailey, and League of Women Voters of the United States Government Affairs Director Jessica Jones Capparell. A recording of the event may be viewed on the C-SPAN website.

Election Disruptions

The League has established an email address (rapidresponse@lwv.org) for members to report incidents that disrupt the public's access to voting. "These may include, but are not limited to, voter intimidation, voter purges, violence, federal agents at the polls, voter registration issues, etc." Those reporting are advised to copy the California League (lwvc@lwvc.org) and the local League president (charad@comcast.net) when doing so. State Co-President Kandea Mosley Gandhi states, "We stand ready to seek court intervention immediately for any illegal activity." On Election Day in Mendocino County, problems should also be reported to the County Elections Office, 707-234-6819.

Transportation to the Polls

Lyft is again partnering with the League to help close transportation gaps that can prevent people from getting to the polls. Through its Lyft Up Voting Access Program, Lyft is providing free and discounted rides to help voters access polling places and voting-related events in partnership with the League of Women Voters. The LWVUS Mobilization and Engagement team will be dispersing our free ride codes in targeted communities.

More LWVUS News

League Seeks to Preserve Voter Privacy

On October 15 the U.S. League joined in a lawsuit challenging the Trump-Vance administration's secretive and unlawful effort to collect and compile sensitive personal information about millions of American voters into a massive nationwide database. The suit challenges the US Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) collection, maintenance, and use of voter registration records from at least 47 states as part of a sweeping effort to investigate unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. The plaintiffs allege that DHS has exceeded its legal authority, violated federal privacy protections, and put the personal information and rights of millions of Americans at risk. Internal government records and other disclosures cited in the complaint reveal the unprecedented scope of the administration's efforts:

- **Voter records from at least 47 states:** DHS has obtained voter registration files covering the vast majority of the country's approximately 174 million registered voters.
- **Millions of records processed:** Internal DHS documents show that, as of June 2026, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a component agency of DHS, had ingested 50.6 million records obtained through the US Department of Justice and another 48.4 million records from other sources.
- **Sensitive information combined with commercial data:** DHS has supplemented voter records with records from commercial databases, including Social Security numbers and other personal identifiers.
- **Voter information incorporated into immigration enforcement systems:** Internal records show that DHS has sought to integrate processed voter data into an enforcement system used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- **Serious concerns about accuracy:** The complaint describes how DHS's methods have generated false positives, potentially identifying US citizens as unlawful voters and exposing them to unwarranted investigations and other consequences.

"The federal government has no business secretly collecting the sensitive personal information of millions of American voters and feeding it into immigration enforcement systems under the guise of election security," said **Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters**. "Let's be clear: Voting is a fundamental right, not a privilege granted by this administration, and our personal information is not theirs to exploit. The League will not stand by while this administration weaponizes voter data, undermines public trust, and threatens our fundamental freedoms." The complete press release is online.

Census Rule Changes Being Considered

The US Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau have proposed significant rule changes to the census that, if approved, would only count US citizens and green card holders toward census apportionment data and would exclude any non-permanent residents and undocumented immigrants from the total apportionment count. For an overview of what is happening with the census, and the League's position, visit this page. LWVUS has published further guidance for Leagues and members, including templates and partner resources to support Leagues and individual members in submitting their comments. Individual members should use our census action alert to submit comments. In mid-October LWVUS submitted a letter requesting an extension for the public comment period to be a full 90 days. On October 2, the Department of Commerce and Census Bureau provided an extension until November 2. While the League welcomes this extension, we still believe a full 90 days are needed for public comment through December 10th.

League Resists Arizona Voter Purge

On Oct. 20 the League of Women Voters, in partnership with Advancement Project, filed an amicus brief in *RNC v. Mi Familia Vota*, asking the Supreme Court to protect the *National Voter Registration Act of 1993* (NVRA). This case stems from the Arizona legislature's efforts to expand voter purges in ways that undermine federal voter protections. If successful, weakening crucial protections of the NVRA will make it harder for voters to get on the rolls and easier to remove them, including just before an election.

The League of Women Voters argues in its brief that the NVRA's mandates are clear. States cannot conduct voter purges right before an election. The brief further details how the NVRA serves as a critical component of the modern American election system that makes voter registration easier, more accessible, and more precise. You can read the full filing here.

Evidence of Power Documented

U.S. League C.E.O. Celina Stewart was quoted in a study by Democracy Forward, released Oct. 9, about the Trump Administration's abuse of power and invasions of privacy leading up to the November elections: "Voters deserve elections that are free from intimidation, political interference, and unnecessary barriers to participation. The findings detailed in this report raise serious concerns about actions that could undermine public confidence in our elections and the ability of eligible voters to participate freely. The League of Women Voters believes that democracy works best when election administration remains fair, transparent, and accessible, and when voters can cast their ballots knowing their rights will be protected and their voices will be heard. We will continue to advocate for policies and practices that safeguard the freedom to vote and strengthen trust in our democratic institutions." A summary of the report, with a link to its complete text, may be found on the Democracy Forward website.

Opinion ...

Sea Level Rise Policies in Mendocino County

A letter to the Board of Supervisors from Peter McNamee, for the GRI Mendo Vision Workgroup

Since its inception, the Mendocino County Vision Workgroup has held dozens of public workshops, bringing together government and community-based organizations in a dialogue with the county on coastal land use planning, permitting and economic development in the county. Thanks to funding from the Coastal Commission, the Sea Level Rise Analysis & Risk Assessment has provided an important granular cataloguing of Mendocino County's coastal vulnerability. Its findings systematically document what coastal residents have articulated anecdotally.

The Workgroup supports the proposed Sea Level Rise Baseline Policies for amendment into the County's Local Coastal Program and its planning and permitting ordinances. We are especially applaud the recognition and inclusion in the baseline policies of salt water intrusion as a hazard that must be considered in coastal planning and permitting. The Coastal Commission has already noted that salt water intrusion has already become a seasonal problem for the City of Fort Bragg's Noyo River water intake. We have also noted that in some low lying areas (Cleone for example) situated on permeable sand and soils, salt water intrusion raises fresh water tables close to the surface, causing problems with wells and septic systems. Sea Level Rise and salt water intrusion is becoming a bigger and bigger problem for a number of the small pocket beach campgrounds and trailer parks that dot the full length of Mendocino County's coastal zone.

While the Workgroup views the proposed policies as a positive step, it is only one small step towards a much needed comprehensive overhaul of the County's coastal planning and permitting process. Frankly, the ramifications of climate change and decades of patchwork amendments have rendered the current Local Coastal Program obsolete and inadequate to the challenge of complying with the Coastal Act and meeting Mendocino County's needs efficiently and effectively. We urge the Board to also consider the following Workgroup recommendations as it proceeds with its long overdue and much needed overhaul of the Local Coastal Program:

County coastal planning & permitting policies should be amended to require providing a county coastal *hazard notice* in writing to all owners of property in the coastal zone located in an area identified by the county as vulnerable to sea level rise & climate change hazards of salt water intrusion, storm flooding and/or erosion impacts. The notice should reference the coastal Groundwater Study and the Sea Level Rise Analysis & Risk Assessment, especially the mapping of climate change amplified hazards and threats now and anticipated in the future.

The County should designate a Sea Level Rise & Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Official, to pursue preventive & adaptive action to optimize public outcomes for the common good, as well as inform disaster prevention preparations for sea level rise and climate-change-amplified disasters after the fact (i.e County Hazard Planning). Additionally, this position should seek grants to help the county mitigate & adapt to Sea Level Rise & Coastal Climate Change challenges.

The County's Legislative Platform should include seeking State and Federal assistance to fund and establish a *voluntary* "Move to Safe Ground" program, which would financially assist property owners and businesses at high risk of serious damage from coastal climate change impacts to voluntarily move to safer locations, before they become climate change victims. Property owners and coastal renters did not cause Sea Level Rise nor Climate Change—it is caused by everyone—and the public (not individual property owners or renters) should bear the liability. Of course, since some industries (i.e. fossil fuel and chemical dependent companies) are the source of a disproportionate amount of green house gas emissions, the federal and state government should require those companies to bear a disproportionate share of the liability costs for damages the public and the environment incur.

The County Local Coastal Program should be amended to impose a moratorium, when appropriate, on development in areas identified in Sea Level Rise & Coastal Climate Change Hazard Assessments where development would put people and property at additional risk because of high risk beyond levels in areas not threatened by Sea Level Rise and Climate Change. The County should also develop sensible regulations within the LCP that allow existing uses to continue; provided, that owners and users are informed of the risks and accept full personal responsibility & relinquish any right to pursue damage against the public for any loss of life or property from climate change caused damage or disasters.

The County should seek state and federal resources to repurpose lands no longer safe for habitation or commercial uses and restore them to use as open spaces for appropriate public recreation, natural habitat, and to serve as Climate Change Disaster Buffers to mitigate damage to other areas.

The steps recommended here in addition to the proposed policies the County is otherwise considering. The right time for planning. These are steps that should have been taken long ago. Mendocino County is not alone, as we are witnessing in communities all along the over 800 mile-long California coast, where communities are unprepared for the increasing severity and frequency of climate change disasters. Wild fires, flooding, salt water intrusion, and coastal erosion are causing billions of dollars in public & private infrastructure damage, as well as putting lives at risk.

We've only just begun a long road of mitigating, remediating and adapting to climate change. The public needs action on the immediate, medium and long term challenges Sea Level Rise and climate change pose. Mendocino County will only optimize its success in addressing climate change with the full engagement and buy-in of the public to a joint public/private effort to adapt to the future which climate change is bringing to our county.

Land Acknowledgement

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County wishes to honor the land we are on and its native peoples. We want to offer recognition and respect; to counter the "doctrine of discovery" with the true story of the people who were already here; to support larger truth-telling and reconciliation efforts; and to remind ourselves that colonization is still happening. We acknowledge that the land where we live and work is on so-called territory of indigenous peoples since time began. We are surrounded by the traditional, ancestral territory and current homeland of many indigenous nations.

Contact LWVMC

By mail: P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg CA 95437
By email: voter@mcn.org. Message phone: (707) 937-4952
Our website: lwvmendo.org
Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1

LWV Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, strives to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy