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County of Del Norte
County Administrative Office
981 "H" Street, Ste. 210
Crescent City, California 95531

Fax
(707) 464-1165

AGENDA DATE: April 12, 2022

TO: Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

**FROM: Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer
Randy Hooper, Assistant County Administrative Officer**

SUBJECT: Repeal of Measure Impact Report, Pursuant to Elections Code 9118(c)

RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION:

Receive and review the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Measure R Repeal Impact report and PowerPoint presentation as prepared by the County Administrative Officer and Assistant County Administrative Officer, presented by the County Administrative Officer.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

Measure R Repeal Impact Report

In November of 2020 the voters of Del Norte County approved Measure R, passing a 1% sales tax in the unincorporated area of the County. On February 10, 2022, a petition was submitted prior to the deadline of February 11, 2022 for an initiative to repeal Measure R. On March 1, 2022 the Del Norte County Recorder verified the required number of valid signatures to place the initiative on the ballot. At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Supervisors on March 8, 2022 the Board ordered a report to be prepared which provides information detailing what the impacts would be should Measure R be repealed, pursuant to Elections Code 9111.

Fiscal Impact - Lost Revenue

The fiscal impacts to the County will be significant if the initiative to repeal Measure R is successful. The obvious impact is the loss of revenue directly received from the collection of the 1% tax on taxable sales in the unincorporated area of the County. As of the writing of this report, the County has collected sales tax from Measure R in Fiscal Year 20/21 (from April 2021 through June of 2021) totaling \$497,112 and \$906,515 in Fiscal Year 21/22 (from July 2021 through December of 2021). Based on the first nine months of actual revenue received from Measure R, the loss of Measure R sales tax revenue is estimated to be approximately \$1.8 million dollars annually.

Direct sales tax revenue is not the only revenue impact that the County will experience if Measure R is repealed. There will also be reduced revenues related to services provided by staff in the Planning Department; revenue recovery generated from abatement efforts by Code Enforcement; revenue from citations issued by Code Enforcement and Animal Control Officers; delays in property tax revenues due to insufficient staff in the Community Development Department to process timely permits and requests for information related to property development in the community; reduced revenue from dog license fees due to insufficient staff and inability to purchase a much needed case management system for tracking dog licenses, billing and an on-line payment option; loss of revenue due to decreased property values near blighted areas; loss of revenue due to a diminished interest in improving or developing property adjacent to blighted areas; and loss of grant revenue that will occur by reverting to pre-Measure R staffing levels among other impacts.

Fiscal Impact - New Positions and Wage Adjustments

For the first time in the County's established history, there is now a local tax measure designated by the voters and supported by the Board to specifically address a long standing need to support, maintain and improve vital services and public facilities and infrastructure in the community. If repeal efforts for Measure R are successful, the Board will be faced with the determination of whether or not the positions and wage adjustments made possible through Measure R can be absorbed by the General Fund. It is clearly understood and recognized by the Board that all the positions and wage adjustments approved through Measure R have been needed for years. Due to budget constraints and always uncertain General Fund revenue, prior to Measure R, the Board could not commit to serious efforts addressing out-of-market safety positions and additional staff to address the increasing demand for services from the public. If the Board chooses to absorb the cost of the approved Measure R wage adjustments and newly created positions, the fiscal impact to the County General Fund would be approximately \$975,000 at current staffing levels.

Fiscal Impact - Leveraging Other Funds

One of the primary uses of Measure R Funds as approved by the voters is the repair of local infrastructure. As such, one of the primary focuses of the Board has been to establish a fund balance in the Measure R Fund in order to leverage other funding that may become available, by using Measure R funds as required match. Many of the Federal, State and other sources for funding often require a match to leverage those funds. It is no secret that in today's market, the cost of capital improvements are historically high and, as such, requiring as little as a 10% match can easily mean hundreds of thousands and more often, millions of dollars. In Fiscal Year 21/22 the Adopted Budget for Measure R included \$475,000 for capital projects as a funding source for long overdue deferred maintenance projects as well as a starting point for creating a reserve for larger projects going forward. The repeal of Measure R, would effectively cancel these efforts.

Infrastructure/Capital Improvements Impact

In addition to the fiscal impact on infrastructure projects as noted above, the repeal of Measure R would also impact the community by reverting the available budget to pre-Measure R funding levels for infrastructure projects. With less than one year of Measure R revenue received, the County has not yet had the opportunity to establish an adequate fund balance to address the infrastructure needs as specifically identified and requested by the voters prior to their passing of Measure R. Furthermore, the Board will once again be put in the same situation it was prior to Measure R, where deferred maintenance projects needed for the health and safety of the public who use County facilities as well as the employees who work in and around them, will not be able to be addressed in a proactive manner with a planned approach available only when funding is available. Without resources to address deferred maintenance issue, the Board is forced to be reactive further increasing costs for projects that must be delayed until funding becomes available.

Vital Service Impacts

As stated earlier in this report, for the first time in the County's established history, there is now a local tax approved by the voters to specifically address the long standing need to increase the support for, maintaining and improving vital services for the residents of Del Norte County as well as those who visit the county. As the Board and the community they serve are aware, for many years the need for these services has far surpassed the County's ability to provide them due to limited resources and insufficient staffing. The need for these services is obvious from the demand from the community for them, specifically related to code enforcement, animal services, planning and development, emergency response by law enforcement, fire and ambulance and response to natural disasters and other emergencies. Prior to Measure R, the Board was unable to make the permanent commitment to wage adjustments for positions that are significantly out-of-market or to create new positions needed. In the first full fiscal year after the voters approved Measure R, the Board has committed funding to long overdue wage adjustments as well as the creation of several critical positions that are directly providing those vital services identified by the voters.

The repeal of Measure R could potentially have the effect of causing the reduction of staffing levels to the levels that existed prior to Measure R in Planning, Code Enforcement, Animal Services, Office of Emergency Services and Dispatch. The impact of this giant step backwards in the ability to provide vital services would be significant and detrimental to the community in a number of ways. Specifically, reverting back to one Planning position would cause delays in responding to public requests for planning related research and planning related reviews including permitting for development. Reverting back to one Code Enforcement Officer would decrease the overall response for services and enforcement, escalate the decay when blight issues are not addressed in a timely manner, increase the potential for further encroachment of blight into residential and commercial areas and increases in environmental impacts from hazardous waste. Reverting back to only one Emergency Services position weakens the County's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies, which is

vital in protecting life, property and cultural resources in our community. Returning to pre-Measure R staffing in Animal Services would once again leave this community without the necessary resources to adequately address nuisances and the neglect of animals. Reducing dispatch by a position affects arguably the most critical service being provided to this community, namely the ability for timely response to emergency situations by first responders. The County's Dispatch Division, which is staffed 24-hours per day, 7-days per week, and 365-days per year, currently has only six full time positions; the repeal of Measure R could potentially return the division to only five dispatchers. The primary impact of reducing the capacity in this division is the reduction of the health and safety of this community. Furthermore, should Measure R be repealed, each department and/or division that had only one full time allocated position prior to Measure R, will once again have zero redundancy and backup. Without backup in these departments/divisions for vacations, sick leave, turnover or other vacancies, the community will undoubtedly suffer when vital services are needed.

It is worth repeating here that should the Board choose to absorb any of the Measure R related costs with the General Fund that these costs would be substantial. If the Board chooses to do this, they would likely find themselves in a position of needing to reduce or eliminate other services or programs provided to the community currently funded by the General Fund.

Staffing Impact

With regard to staffing, the impact to the County from the repeal of Measure R goes beyond the obvious impact of actually losing recently created vital services positions. A less quantifiable impact is that losing capacity in departments and divisions additionally causes employee burnout from insufficient staffing levels resulting in the inability to keep up with public service demands, which, in turn, causes additional stress for those support positions that have to deal with frustration from members of the public who are not receiving timely responses. Additionally, losing or reducing much needed wage adjustments for law enforcement, other safety positions and animal services not only affects the morale of the current employees in those positions, but also has a significant impact on the County's ability to be competitive in the labor market for recruitment and retention of employees. Staff vacancies are without question the largest factor in an inadequate level of vital services provided. Measure R is the first dedicated local revenue source to allow the Board to budget for long overdue and much needed salary adjustments in order to address these very real wage and staffing issues. The loss of Measure R would be a huge blow to the hard working and dedicated staff of Del Norte County, which again, is immeasurable but certainly significant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of repealing Measure R far exceeds the obvious impact of lost revenue. There are significant fiscal, infrastructure, public service as well as County staffing impacts. Measure R for the first time in the established history of this County has created vital services positions and began the establishment of reserves for infrastructure projects simply not possible prior to the voters approving Measure R. Furthermore, the voters approved a tax

without a sunset, making it clear the need for funding to support vital services is not temporary. As such, the impact that is likely the most significant from the repeal of Measure R is the loss of ongoing, long term benefits the Board has set in place by creating permanent positions and setting priorities for all of the vital services as directed by the voters of Del Norte County and made possible through Measure R. .

ALTERNATIVES:

N/A

CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

This section meets 2 of the following outcome measures for children in Del Norte County:

- Children ready for and succeeding in school.**
- Children and youth are healthy and preparing for adulthood.**
- Families are economically self-sufficient.**
- Families are safe, stable and nurturing.**
- Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life.**
- No impact to Children as a result of this action.**

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

AUDITOR:

- COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Neal Lopez**
- ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:**
- COUNTY COUNSEL:**
- PERSONNEL:**
- OTHER DEPARTMENT:**



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AGENDA DATE: April 12, 2022

TO: Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

**FROM: Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer
Randy Hooper, Assistant County Administrative Officer**

SUBJECT: FY 21/22 Measure R Budget Overview and Update

RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION:

Receive and review the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Measure R budget overview and update report and PowerPoint presentation as prepared by the County Administrative Officer and the Assistant County Administrative Officer, as presented by the County Administrative Officer.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

In November of 2020, Measure R was supported in Del Norte County in order to provide funding for vital local services including support for law enforcement, emergency response, public infrastructure and other related capital projects/uses, preparing for and responding to natural disasters and health emergencies, improving animal control services, maintaining dispatch services for fire, ambulance and law enforcement, maintaining jail and criminal justice services as well as addressing blight and public nuisance (code enforcement).

The tax approved in the unincorporated area of the County was projected to generate \$1.2 million annually. As of the preparation of this report, the County has received funding through the month of December and is on pace to exceed original projections by several hundred thousand dollars. The Auditor-Controller is projecting year end Measure R revenue to be \$1.6-\$1.8 million, which significantly increases the County's ability to dedicate funding to expand and improve upon the services that were specifically identified by our community. Below are the approved uses of Measure R by the Board of Supervisors through the adopted FY 21/22 Budget as well as an update on each.

Support Law Enforcement and Maintain/Improve Dispatch Services

The FY 21/22 Adopted Budget for Measure R dedicated \$748,700 to support law

enforcement and maintain dispatch services. These funds represent much needed wage adjustments for all patrol and field related law enforcement positions (Sheriff's Office patrol positions, adult and juvenile Probation Officers, and District Attorney Investigators) as well as adult and juvenile correctional staff. For years, due to budget constraints, the County has been significantly out-of-market compared to other local law enforcement agencies (e.g. Crescent City Police Department, Curry County Sheriff's Office and Brookings Police Department) and other comparable local governments, which has resulted in Del Norte County being a training ground for officers that would then move on to higher paying jobs. At the request of the community to fill the allocated law enforcement positions in this County and at the request of the dedicated and hard-working employees who risk their health and safety on a daily basis, the Board approved these wage adjustments to make these critical positions more competitive in the local market and in an effort to be more successful in recruiting and retaining trained/experienced officers for this community.

To further support law enforcement, the adopted budget will also allow for a second administrative support position with the approval of a Records Clerk. For years, the Sheriff's Office has done their best to stay afloat with one administrative support position, often times falling behind on personnel related tasks, records management, risk management and other administrative functions. In June of 2021, the Sheriff's Office was able to hire a Records Clerk to improve upon administrative efficiencies and therefore the services provided to the community.

To maintain/improve dispatch services, the Board approved one new dispatch position as well as approving a much needed wage adjustment for this highly stressful and critical position. The Dispatch Division, prior to the approval of this position, was operating with five dispatchers for a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and 365 days per year division within the Sheriff's Office. Although the Board recognizes the need for even more positions for this vital service to the community (dispatching all local law enforcement and emergency personnel), Measure R made it possible to take a step in the right direction to address this need.

Increase Code Enforcement/Public Nuisance/Blight Services

The Board also dedicated \$76,500 of Measure R funding in FY 21/22 to improve local code enforcement/public nuisance/blight services by adding an additional Code Enforcement Officer position. Thanks to Measure R funding, for the first time since this position was created, as of December 24, 2021, the County has two Code Enforcement (CE) Officers. Code Enforcement is by far one of the most requested services in our community and was one of the highest priorities of those surveyed for the use of Measure R funding. Having a second officer will not only provide backup for the current Code Enforcement Officer for safety when addressing blight and public nuisance in some of the more remote locations in the County, but will also allow for additional services related to code enforcement this community so badly needs.

Increase Emergency and Disaster Response

Over the past decade, California has experienced more frequent and severe natural disasters and emergencies. Unfortunately, Del Norte County has not been immune to this

trend. Add a worldwide pandemic to this and the need for additional emergency preparedness and response, provided by the County's Office of Emergency Services (OES), has never been more important. Recognizing the need to protect life and property of this community and that the requirements of this department far exceeds the capability of one position, the Board has committed a portion of the Measure R tax revenue (\$76,500 in FY 21/22) to funding an OES Coordinator position to assist the OES Manager in meeting the need for emergency preparedness, response and recovery in our community. The addition of one position brings the OES Department to two full time operational positions. Due to budget constraints, similar to Code Enforcement, the County has never been able to fund more than one operational position in the OES Department until the passage of Measure R. Since September, due to recruiting difficulties, the OES Department has been without a single operational position. As of the preparation of this report, both OES positions are now filled and we are confident that all OES related functions, meetings, trainings and exercises will be back on track.

Increase/improve Animal Services

With the adoption of the FY 21/22 Budget, the Board approved a Kennel Attendant position as requested by the Department Head to assist the Animal Control Officers (ACO's) with day to day cleaning of the kennels and to allow the ACO's to focus on field operations and requests for services from the community. However, prior to the recruitment for this position, the Department Head determined there was a greater need in the Animal Services Division and the demand for services exceeded the current capacity of the department. In response, a request was submitted to replace the Kennel Attendant position with a supervisory position for animal services. In addition, to address current staffing requests for increased education and training and to fairly pay the Animal Control Officers for the actual duties being performed, the request also included a slight adjustment to the wages for the ACO's. On January 25th at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Board approved these changes and committed approximately \$60,000 to the Animal Services Department for the remainder of FY 21/22. The County is currently recruiting for the Animal Services Supervisor position with the intent to have it filled this month.

Increase in Planning Services

With the adoption of the Measure R FY 21/22 Budget, the Board allocated \$77,000 to the Planning Department to add one Planner position. This community relies on County Planning Division staff for a number of services including the review and application of various land use functions such as the review and circulation of development projects to the Planning Commission including subdivisions, Coastal Development Permits, and environmental review for larger projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act, etc., active coordination with regulatory agencies for compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program, development in high fire hazard severity zones, housing development requirements, providing zoning and general plan information on property for land owners, as well as land use information provided for required for real estate transactions, etc. In years past, the Planning Division has consisted of as many as three Planners who were augmented by a Department Head who also had Planning experience and so, for all intents and purposes, the Division had four Planners available to assist the community. Over the past decade, due to budgetary constraints, the Division has only

been able to be staffed with a single Planner, augmented by the Department Head which has greatly diminished the ability of the Planning Division to provide as high of a level of service to the community as needed causing project delays and community frustrations. Having dedicated funding for a second position not only meets a long standing priority of the Board, but the community as well. In September of 2021, the Planning Department was able to hire a second planner.

Public Infrastructure/Capital Improvements

At the time of the Adopted FY 21/22 Budget in September, the \$474,921 approved by the Board for Public Infrastructure/Capital Improvements represented the balance of Measure R tax revenue consisting of the projected carry forward fund balance from FY 20/21 (April, May and June 2021 receipts) and the estimated revenue for FY 21/22 less the other approved Measure R uses discussed above. Future capital improvements will projects through Measure R will focus on County facilities the public utilizes the most as well as facilities and infrastructure that provide the most vital services to the residents of Del Norte County.

As stated and illustrated above, Measure R tax revenue was specifically committed to fund services approved by the voters. In closing, I feel it is important to address some of the misinformation surrounding how Measure R is being allocated, used and accounted for. To be clear, all of the Measure R Funding that has been allocated has been for improving and expanding services. A specific function of the Measure R Oversight Committee is to ensure Measure R Funding is not used to supplant existing services or projects. Measure R Funding allocated towards wages has all been directly related to the intent and purpose of Measure R. Each wage adjustment and position created is in an effort to improve and expand services to the community. As promised, there have not been any Administrative salary or benefit increases funded by Measure R. In addition, Measure R revenue and expenditures are accounted for in a separate fund dedicated specifically for accounting for Measure R funds. Measure R has not been and will not be deposited into the County's General Fund even though it is a general tax and can be used for general purposes. The Board and Budget Team decided to account for these funds separately for transparency to the community and to simplify the role of the Oversight Committee in overseeing Measure R tax revenues and expenditures. Also, accounting for these funds separately, prevents excess funds from being absorbed or closed out to the County's General Fund and allows unspent funds in any given fiscal year to carry forward to the following fiscal year. This allows Measure R funds to build a significant fund balance/reserve for costly infrastructure and capital improvement projects. Lastly, as a general revenue, Measure R can also be used a match to leverage even more state and federal funding for this community that may become available for uses related to the purposes specified in Measure R.

ALTERNATIVES:

Update only, no alternatives required.

CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

This section meets 2 of the following outcome measures for children in Del Norte County:

- Children ready for and succeeding in school.
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- Families are economically self-sufficient.
- Families are safe, stable and nurturing.
- Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life.
- No impact to Children as a result of this action.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

AUDITOR:

- COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Neal Lopez
- ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:
- COUNTY COUNSEL:
- PERSONNEL:
- OTHER DEPARTMENT:



DEL NORTE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

450 H Street #171
Crescent City, CA 95531
PHONE (707) 464-7210 FAX (707) 465-6609

Katherine N. Micks
District Attorney

March 22, 2022

Re: Measure R Funding

Dear Board of Supervisors:

The District Attorney's office receives Measure R funding which makes up 3% of the salary for the two District Attorney Investigator positions. Del Norte County DA Investigators have some of the lowest pay in the State of California. Measure R has allowed this office to make up some of that pay disparity. As with most law enforcement agencies, retention and recruitment of qualified personnel has been difficult and Measure R can help reverse that trend.

Historically, the DA's office has not been able to fund new vehicles for investigators. In the future, I expect Measure R funds to be available to assist our investigators in obtaining new vehicles and necessary equipment. If Measure R funds are repealed, morale, recruitment, and retention will be negatively affected. Public safety is very important to our community, and Measure R funds are necessary to increasing the effectiveness of this agency as well as all of our law enforcement partners.

Sincerely,

Katherine Micks
District Attorney



Del Norte County Probation Department
Lonnie Reyman, Chief Probation Officer

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 2022
TO: CAO Lopez, ACAO Hooper
FROM: Lonnie Reyman, Chief Probation Officer
SUBJECT: Impacts of a recall of Measure R funding

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lonnie Reyman", is written over the "FROM:" line of the memorandum.

Probation fills a very unique and often misunderstood roll in public safety and the health and wellbeing of our community. While Sheriffs and Police are front and center in public safety, catching bad guys and locking up people who would do harm to others, Probation is truly the embodiment of upstream law enforcement. Probation is tasked with addressing the criminal behaviors of youth with the goal of rehabilitating them so they can become stable, well-adjusted, tax-paying citizens in the future. Probation is also tasked with addressing not the right-now behaviors that street cops do with adults, but with long established patterns of behavior that leads them to the right-now criminal behavior, with the goal of changing the not-yet behaviors in the future.

Despite this extremely difficult and demanding and impactful role, the officers of Probation in Del Norte County have historically been underpaid to the tune of 40% on average with peers around the state. Compared to the counties in the North the salary disparities are less severe and have been greatly reduced with the salary increases that Measure R has allowed. For comparison, here are Del Norte's salaries as a percentage of five other northern counties:

	Probation officer	Juvenile Corrections Officer
Humboldt	97.7%	99.4%
Siskiyou	107%	N/A
Mendocino	85.9%	73.4%
Lassen	114%	N/A
Tehama	94.4%	93.5%

This is, however, only one factor in maintaining appropriate community corrections services in Del Norte County. The Probation Department has been hit with staffing shortages as severe as those of our sister agencies, currently at a 36% vacancy rate for sworn officers in both the Probation and the Juvenile Hall divisions. Despite ceaseless recruitments, the number of quality applicants that are qualified and have an aptitude for this work is extremely limited, and local

competition for these applicants is fierce. The Probation Department has an uphill slog in this respect too, when it is considered that a Deputy Probation Officer makes 3% less than a Sheriff's Deputy Recruit, and 12% less than a Deputy 1. Similarly, though it is less of a disparity, a Juvenile Correctional Officer makes 1% less than a Sheriff's Correctional Officer Recruit and 6% less than a Correction Officer 1.

These long-standing salary disparities for officers in the Probation Department have, to a small degree, been alleviated by the salary increases that were realized by the funding from Measure R. Any employee feels acknowledged and affirmed in the work they do when they receive more pay, and this feeling is felt even more poignantly by peace officers in the Probation Department who have dedicated themselves to providing opportunities for some of our community members to turn their lives around, holding them accountable for their actions, and helping ensure the safety of our neighbors and loved ones. If Measure R is recalled, officers in the Juvenile Hall Division will suffer a .5% decrease in salary and the officers in the Probation Division will suffer a 3% decrease in salary. As a result of the current negotiated agreement, these officers will not lose the entirety of their increases, however by our own community rescinding its support for this measure that funds public safety this will definitely have a negative impact on morale in a department that is already struggling to maintain mandated and needed services while extremely short-staffed.

It is inevitable that this impact to morale department-wide will affect retention and recruitment. In addition to our own mission, public safety of the greater community will be affected by this struggle. In communities across the state Probation Departments have been relied on to assist front-line law enforcement officers in the midst of crises: probation officers were among the first to respond the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino during the terrorist attack in 2015 and a probation officer was among the team who found, engaged, and killed those individuals, probation officers were some of the first responding officers to the Rancho Tehama shooting in 2017, probation officers and employees have played critical roles in assisting with evacuations and ensuring public safety during the Camp, Carr, and Mendocino Complex Fires in Butte, Shasta, and Mendocino counties in 2018, and the Dixie and Caldor Fires in 2021 which covered eight total counties. The assistance that officers from the Probation Department can provide to our local law enforcement during crises like these is incalculable, but only if those officers and services exist. Measure R has and will play an important role in ensuring that those officers are available and appropriately trained and equipped when needed.

Aside from the hit to morale, staffing, and as a result operations, that will be felt, the Department will be saddled with making up the lack of funding for salaries out of the General Fund budget. Because we make great effort to utilize other funding sources for services, the practical effect of this would be to freeze vacant positions, ensuring that if we ever have the opportunity we will not be able to fully staff our officer positions, continuing to compound the lack of services we are able to provide to our community.

Yet another impact of a recall of Measure R would be a lack of funding for infrastructure, or "maintain[ing]...criminal justice services" and "infrastructure" as it is termed in the Measure. The Probation Department has a longstanding and critical need to replace the outdated control system at the Juvenile Hall. A request for proposal process was completed in 2016 and the

Department was unable to afford to meet even the base cost of system replacement. This is an ongoing issue that the County has been unable to afford to fix to this point. With a little time, it might be possible to utilize Measure R funds to complete this project and ensure continued operation of the Juvenile Hall, however if the Measure is recalled we will be put in the position of operating the facility on a hope and a prayer until such a time as we are able to secure a funding source to complete this maintenance.

In summary, Measure R has provided a boon to Del Norte law enforcement and the Probation Department, and it would be extremely disheartening to lose this funding stream. This loss would:

- Have a negative effect on officers' morale
- Compound an already difficult task of staff retention and recruitment
- Impact general fund budgets and staffing levels
- Inhibit the County's ability to replace the Juvenile Hall control system.

Lastly, in regards to the funding that has been allocate to the Department, I have noted that the Auditor has transferred 25% of the funds as an expenditure for the 2nd quarter of the fiscal year. While I understand the logic behind this as all the funds are allocated to salaries, as my department is only staffed at 64% currently, I don't believe the transfer is an exact representation of actual expenditures for these funds. I and my staff will be working with the Auditor/Controller to clarify the transfer and ensure that both the designated purpose and the reality on the ground are met in the expenditure of these funds.



COUNTY OF DEL NORTE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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March 22, 2022

To: Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer
Randy Hooper, Assistant County Administrative Officer

From: Heidi Kunstal, Community Development Director

Re: Measure R Impact Statement – Community Development Department – Planning Division and Code Enforcement Division

Per the Board's direct on March 8, 2022, below is a summary of the impacts to the Community Development Department if Measure R was to be repealed.

The Planning Division has been short-staffed since 2010 when the Division was reduced to one Planner position with assistance from the Deputy Director of Building and Planning. In 2015, the Deputy of Building and Planning position was reclassified to the Assistant Community Development Director position and similar assistance was provided until 2018 when the position was vacated. This position has not been refilled resulting in the Department having only one planner until September 2022 when a second position was added using Measure R funds. The addition of the second Planner position was imperative to the operation of the Planning Division and Community Development Department. The Planner position interacts heavily with the public and is responsible for a variety of duties that impact the public. Functions of the Planning Division include the following:

- current planning (request for zoning and other land use information, processing development applications etc.);
- long range planning (updates to General Plan, Local Coastal Program, zoning ordinances to remain current with state law);
- act as staff for the County's Natural Resources Goal Committee;
- perform a lead role in County's Emergency Operation Center as the staff for the Planning and Intelligence Section;
- prepares and oversees a variety of grants to assist other County functions in addition to the Planning Division;
- oversees permitting for all local mining operations; and
- oversees the County's Floodplain administration.

The Planning Division has functioned since 2018 by focusing primarily on current planning work which is the day-to-day request for information and the processing of development applications. By the spring of 2021, it was apparent that the Division was unable to keep up on current planning work due to the increase in inquiries regarding development in Del Norte County and the increasing complexity of responding to inquiries due to environmental constraints and navigating state and federal

regulations. While I was aware of the need for the second position, it became incredibly obvious when the one Planner moved out of the area. As an experienced planner, the duties far exceeded a 40-hour workweek and I was barely able to keep up with working 9+ hour days and Saturdays. Refilling the position took five months and involved multiple rounds of interviews. Finding qualified people who wanted to work in Del Norte County and were able to find housing was challenging. Fortunately, we were able to refill the vacant position and then a second position following the passage of Measure R and the wise decision of the oversight committee that timely planning services are vital to the citizens of Del Norte County.

In particular, the second position is essential to being able to continue to provide a minimum level of service needed to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner and to process development applications (i.e. review building permits, minor subdivisions, use permits, boundary adjustments, etc.). With only one position, delays will be experienced in most aspects of the development process as the Planning Division reviews all building permits and grading permits in addition to processing all planning permits. This does not factor in sickness, vacation, and the overall realistic concern of burnout. Furthermore, even small counties such as Alpine and Sierra have a minimum of two planners to avoid the public having a lapse in service.

Additionally, the long range planning, managing grants, and maintaining the mining program would be critically impacted as there will be no staff to fulfill these duties. Potential impacts could include the mining program being taken over by the State, losing good standing with granting agencies as grant obligations are left unmet, and possible inability to obtain Community Development Block Grants if the Housing Element and its implementation programs are not being followed. As noted earlier, the position fulfills a primary role in the Emergency Operation Center. If we have a disaster of any magnitude, it would be expected that the planner would be re-allocated to this role further impacting daily services related to permitting.

While it is obvious, that the sole planner would be under a lot of pressure to perform, staff reduction would also have an effect on the morale of the front line staff as they have to explain the delays to the public when the permits take longer than expected or if the individual hasn't received a call back as soon as hoped. We have struggled to keep front-line staff and any further reductions in this area would result in even greater delays to the public. Also, longer delays in receiving information agitate the public and result in more complaints to the Board and overall lower opinions of the Department.

For bullet points of the impacts discussed above ---

- prolonged review process for development permits (i.e. all planning permits and most building and grading permits);
- longer return times for responses to planning questions;
- staff burnout, loss of institutional knowledge when existing staff seeks work elsewhere;
- lower morale from existing front line staff due to public pressures to obtain permits and information in a timely manner;
- missed opportunities for development due to time delays in responding to requests for information;
- possible of state oversight of some programs if the County can't perform reporting/inspection responsibilities in a timely manner;
- lack of redundancy if one planner leaves or is away for a prolonged period;
- penalties from state agencies by way of new oversight mechanisms;

- potential inability to seek funding if the jurisdiction falls into poor standing with funding agency (e.g. unmet grant responsibilities, loss of CDBG funds if Housing Element programs are not accounted for, etc.);
- loss of planning permit revenues from applicants becoming disinterested in participating in a prolonged permitting process due to short staffing. This would collaterally effect the Building Inspection Division as planning permits includes subdivisions which create new lots for development; and
- loss of potential grant funds to supplant the cost of Division due to lack of staff.

Code Enforcement Division

A full-time Code Enforcement Officer position was allocated during FY 02/03 and has remained filled since that time. Overwhelmingly, the Code Enforcement Division receives the most interest from the public of all of the Department's Divisions. The Code Enforcement Division tracks all requests for investigations and based on the number received has to focus the greatest effort on code violations that pose an immediate threat to the community's health and welfare. The Division has historically received \$15,000 per year to cover abatement costs. This covers the cost of renting disposal bins, tipping fees at the transfer station, and contractor costs for larger projects that require heavy equipment. With Measure R the professional services line item was increased by \$5,000 to \$20,000. Voluntary compliance is sought first in all cases in order to minimize the cost to the County. As we have seen an increase in the number of homeless individuals in our community, we have seen a corresponding increase in investigations of complaint forms filed to deal with illegal disposal of trash and abandoned cars, and recreational vehicles. As the demand for housing has increased and the rising values of real estate, so have the expectations of property owners and renters to live in clean and safe areas. Previously the worse code violations were isolated to specific areas, but they have expanded into established residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

With Measure R we were able to add a second position to the Code Enforcement Division to provide a higher level of service to the public. The second Code Enforcement Officer position allows for more nuisance cases to be taken farther, enforcement-wise, which results in more cases being closed with full compliance and more of the cost of doing business being recovered. Experience has shown that with one code enforcement position, code enforcement spends more time "putting out fires" vs conducting formal enforcement to achieve compliance and cost recovery. The Division averages around 385 new complaints/cases a year. Depending on the nature and complexity of the cases, one Code Enforcement Officer can satisfactorily handle 150 new cases per year. Those 385 new complaints per year consist of several thousand code violations stemming from health and safety violations, nuisance code violations, illegal cannabis cultivation, grading violations, building code violations, zoning code violations, etc.

What we are observing and what is being confirmed through complaint activity is that code enforcement violations in Del Norte County are on the rise, not decline. Reducing the staffing level of code enforcement will only serve to further the escalating blight problems in the community. Prior to the hiring of the second Code Enforcement Officer, the issuance of administrative citations as a tool was already being shelved in order to deal with more pressing violations. Since the addition of a second code enforcement officer, the Division has been able to resume the issuance of administrative

citations. Administrative citations are not appropriate or effective for all enforcement cases but when appropriate can have a good outcome and help recover staff costs.

In addition to the day-to-day code violations, the Division's scope of responsibility has been and continues to be expanded. Most recently, cannabis enforcement has predominantly been delegated to the Code Enforcement Division. Cannabis enforcement cases can consume upwards of 1/3 of an officer's enforcement time.

There is also a correlation between increased crime and nuisance conditions. When a property is allowed to degrade into nuisance conditions, the criminal element occupies these locations as a base to operate from, hoard junk, sell drugs and victimize each other in addition to stealing from the neighborhood. The outcome is the destruction of the quality of life in a neighborhood and community.

The impacts to the community if the second code enforcement officer position was to be eliminated include the following:

- decrease in service and enforcement;
- escalating decay of homes and structures when not addressed in a timely manner;
- continued neighborhood safety concerns (see above correlation between nuisance and crime);
- perceived and real loss of property values;
- loss of revenues from added lien repayments which help to pay for larger cleanups beyond the annual professional services budget;
- diminished interest in improving property adjacent to blighted areas
- loss of tourism due to unsightliness;
- potential further encroachment into residential and commercial areas; and
- environmental impacts such as hazardous waste.

In addition to the burden placed on one single code enforcement officer to address all countywide complaints, the loss of the second position would create more work for the front-line workers in responding to complainants and alleged violators. Both sides are typically aggravated by having to either file a complaint or respond to a complaint. Delays in being acknowledged tend to agitate them further creating hostile interactions.

Measure R Impacts

Department of Agriculture

Our department has seen the calls for service and activities of both its divisions increase in recent years. Our Animal Services division has particularly seen an increase in the volume and severity of calls, especially in the area of neglect/abuse. It is clear that the way our department has been structured and equipped in the past is insufficient for our current mission. Our facilities are also insufficient for our current mission. Measure R funding is a clear path to remedy these issues, it is hard to envision the general fund being able to support our needs as it hasn't been able to in the past.

Fiscal Impacts

Dog licensing revenue has fallen steadily for over 50 years. We are hoping to use staffing increases made possible by measure R to increase dog licensing compliance and thus revenue. We are also planning to use measure R funding to obtain case tracking/licensing software that will allow us to save staff time on licensing and offer an online licensing/payment option. If we are forced to revert to pre-measure R staffing levels I anticipate losing tens of thousands of dollars in unclaimed gas tax and mill tax funds in our agricultural division. Lack of sufficient staffing to cover emergency animal services issues or basic office coverage inevitably leads to agricultural staff being diverted from their regular duties.

Recruitment/Retention/Morale Impacts

Measure R funding was used to increase the compensation of our Animal Control Officer positions by nearly 16%. This action was long overdue given the danger and stress of this position. We have seen the benefit in our recent Animal Control Officer recruitment as our number of applications more than doubled from previous recruitments. Retaining officers has been a challenge for us. Given the small size of our department turnover is any of our full time positions is very disruptive. This increase is a key piece in improving our recruitment and retention.

Our largest use of measure R funds is in the new Animal Services Supervisor position. Having an animal services supervisor position will also help with recruitment at the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner position as agriculture and standards professionals will not come here prepared to directly supervise animal services. Placing these untrained individuals in direct control of animal services is unfair to them and to their supervisees. I have spoken to several people who would have applied for our last Commissioner vacancy but did not due to this issue.

Having a dedicated supervisor for animal services will also help with retention of Animal Control Officers and part time animal care staff by providing them more direct leadership/support. Morale has often been low as staff have watched their friends do much easier jobs for the same or higher pay. Constant stress and public scorn caused by the department having insufficient resources is also a huge drag on morale.

Departmental Safety and Service Impacts

We are in the process of modernizing our equipment, training and facilities. This includes animal handling equipment, live capture traps, body cameras, case tracking software, new garage doors, workspaces for additional staff and many other tools we need to bring our department into the 21st

Century. It is difficult to imagine these improvements continuing at an acceptable pace without Measure R support.

Without an animal services supervisor and our Deputy Commissioner position vacant, we are relying on the Agricultural Commissioner to oversee the department, represent Ag/Animal Services issues in the EOC and likely oversee the emergency animal shelter. This is not sustainable for day to day operations much less the duration of any significant emergency. Losing the Animal Services Supervisor position would also mean one catchpole trained staff member the department would have in emergencies, costing us any hope of being able to safely field two animal services teams at once when needed.

We cannot provide the public anywhere near the service they expect with our pre-measure R resources. The Animal Services Supervisor position the key piece in being able to supervise the number of employees the Animal Services division needs and in bringing complicated cases to a resolution. We have an obligation to provide quality animal care to the residents of our shelter 365 days per year. We cannot go back to the old standards of animal care at the shelter. If we lose Measure R funding I will likely propose that DNSO take over field animal services while we run the shelter. I believe we cannot do both things properly at our previous staffing levels.