

RESOLUTION NO. -2020

RESOLUTION OF THE FORT BRAGG CITY COUNCIL TO SUBMIT A DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (“DOT”) BUILD GRANT FOR THE MENDOCINO RAILWAY / CALIFORNIA WESTERN RAILROAD / SKUNK TRAIN TO REPAIR ITS TUNNEL AND REHABILITATE ITS TRACK

WHEREAS, Mendocino Railway / California Western Railroad / Skunk Train known in the community as the Skunk Train, has served the Mendocino region since 1885, providing freight, passenger, and mail service to businesses and residents in and around Fort Bragg and Willits, California; and

WHEREAS, Skunk Train has also long operated a world-renowned tourist train, one of our nation’s Top Ten, attracting millions of visitors to the region; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 one of Skunk Train’s tunnels collapsed, cutting the railroad in two and preventing the Skunk Train from operating between Fort Bragg and Willits. The tunnel collapse has severely constrained the effectiveness of railroad operations, effectively cutting off freight and passenger services between Fort Bragg and Willits; and

WHEREAS, Skunk Train needs to replace more than 30,000 chromated copper arsenate railroad ties installed by a prior owner with new strong and environmentally safe railroad ties in order to provide effective commuter passenger and freight services between Fort Bragg and Willits CA; and

WHEREAS, Skunk Train seeks to repair and replace the Engine House; and

WHEREAS, Skunk Train seeks to implement various health and safety features; and

WHEREAS, the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives; and

WHEREAS, at least 50 percent of BUILD funds must be awarded to projects located in rural areas and Fort Bragg and Mendocino County are very rural in nature; and

WHEREAS, Skunk Train will contribute a 50 percent match for the project; and

WHEREAS, the eligibility requirements of BUILD allow project sponsors at the State and local levels to obtain funding for multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to support through traditional DOT programs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Bragg is an eligible grant sponsor; and

WHEREAS, the Project is exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and Title 14, the California Code of Regulations (“CEQA Guidelines”), Section 15301; and

WHEREAS, based on all the evidence presented, the City Council finds as follows:

1. The repair of the Skunk Train tunnel and tracks would be a significant economic benefit to Fort Bragg and the surrounding rural economy of Mendocino County;

2. The City is committed to the success of the Skunk Train; and
3. This funding is critical for the repair of the tunnel and the upgrade to the rail lines and the ultimate success of the Skunk Train and our local rural and regional economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Fort Bragg does hereby authorize the City Manager to submit the BUILD program grant and act as the sponsor and grant administrator for the Mendocino Railway / California Western Railroad / Skunk Train project.

The above and foregoing Resolution was introduced by _____, seconded by _____, and passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Fort Bragg held on the 11th day of May, 2020, by the following vote:

**AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:
RECUSED:**

**William V. Lee
Mayor**

ATTEST:

**June Lemos, CMC
City Clerk**