



## CITY OF FORTBRAGG

416 N. Franklin Street  
Fort Bragg, CA95437

November 17, 2025

Mendocino County Superior Court  
Court Executive Kim Turner  
Presiding Judge, Hon. Keith Faulder  
100 North State Street  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Judge Faulder and Ms. Turner:

We write to you with concerns about services available at Mendocino County's only coastal Court, the Ten Mile Branch. While we are relieved to have read the Court's public statement that the loss in services is temporary, we write because a failure to restore them would be devastating.

Shunting non-criminal proceedings to Ukiah would create barriers of time and cost for many of our most vulnerable citizens seeking access to the court. If family law, restraining order, probate, and civil cases are heard only in Ukiah, many coast residents will be effectively blocked entirely from accessing justice.

This is true for all litigants, including those able to hire a lawyer, but particularly those representing themselves, which is an increasingly large percentage of those who come to court. Those in serious need of domestic violence restraining orders may simply be unable to get one, and instead remain in danger. A parent may be unable to get a custody order, and conflicts with the other parent may continue without remedy, harming their child. A person needing to probate an estate in order to inherit the house they live in may be unable to do so, and may lose the house to a mortgage lender. Small claims court will no longer be the accessible tool it is designed to be.

The distance to Ukiah puts coast litigants at a disadvantage. Driving to Ukiah for an evidentiary hearing will mean three hours on the road—perhaps for nothing, if the hearing is postponed at the last minute. Nor can the court remedy the situation with remote appearances. Evidentiary hearings and trials simply cannot be effectively conducted remotely, particularly for those representing themselves, and those who try will be at a significant disadvantage.

The coast needs a courthouse, one that serves all the vital functions of a courthouse. We ask that you assure that the Ten Mile Branch is assigned a judge or judges who are able to hear family law, restraining order, probate, and civil matters, as well as criminal ones, so that residents from Gualala to Westport can have fair access to justice.

Sincerely,

Fort Bragg City Council:  
Mayor Godeke, Vice Mayor Rafanan, Council Members Albin-Smith, Hockett, and Peters