

**From:** [Jacob Patterson](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- 6/26/25 Special Mill Site Meeting  
**Date:** Friday, June 20, 2025 4:35:03 PM

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City Council,

Although I still support moving forward with this process, I must reiterate my objections to several of the documents that are being provided as part of the agenda materials, including the Illustrative Plan Update and the Land Use Plan Update. It is almost like the team working on this is going out of their way to drum up opposition by including objectionable details that I believe are contrary to what most of the community will want. Why do you keep doing this? In no scenario do I think the updated version of these documents will gain wide support for a variety of reasons.

One significant concern I have is the Noyo Center having an outsized influence on this process through one of the sub-consultants being an officer. That is totally inappropriate, in my opinion, and what appears to be undue influence is reflected in the updated illustrative and land use plans that include what I expect to be a controversial proposal for a land swap and lot line adjustments as well as proximity to the air strip, which still appears to be encroached upon and shortened. Why are those aspects included as well as having a specific site plan that hasn't even been applied for let alone approved. The rest of the map doesn't include building locations for buildings that don't already exist and this site shouldn't either.

Another significant concern is how the still-contaminated OUE is depicted as already having the large mill pond subdivided into two. That proposal has received a lot of objections and push-back and it is presumptuous to include it in this illustrative plan that should, at most, show the current conditions for OUE or a note that the pond subdivision is only a proposal by the land-owner, not anything we are proactively and prematurely agreeing to as part of this process. Personally, I think the people objecting to modest additional train and trolley tracks (or restoration of use) are off-base but I agree with many concerns raised about the proposal to subdivide the pond into two, which would also remove the dam from current levels of state oversight.

I didn't hear a lot of support for that proposal just as I didn't hear a lot of support for a land swap that endangers our air strip. It is as if the consulting team hasn't been listening to the public and is proceeding with whatever they think is best. I do not appreciate this approach and I expect many others feel the same.

Regards,

--Jacob

**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** Kathy Westfall <westfallservices@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 12:34 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Hello friends

I respectfully want to let you know that they're about 100 + people that I know of that are the silent majority that would like you to do the following. I know you are doing your best, but these are our requests : Please finalize negotiations on Part Two of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). We also ask that this comes with a development plan that prioritizes housing that is affordable and the creation of local jobs. We also urge swift action to remove the remaining barriers to tunnel clearing and begin long-overdue restoration. This bottleneck has already cost us valuable time and taxpayer dollars.

If we don't make a change now, the economic failure of our town is inevitable. It's time to wake up and allow growth to happen here .

Kathy Westfall

**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** Marc Tager <marcatager@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 1:53 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** City Council

Dear Council Members

I am writing you this letter to ask you to continue the stay of the lawsuit hopefully at least until the end of the year. I also would like you to continue pushing forward on the MOU setting the parameters of an enforceable deal.

If we consider the above 1a, allowing the tunnel to be cleared is 1b.

With Respect,

Marc  
Sent as if by magic from my iPhone

**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** johnrmredding@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 3:18 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** Norcalmom4@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Millsite Development

Greetings,

I was pleased to read that the City of Fort Bragg and the owners of the millsite have resumed deliberations. I write to support this effort which I hope will culminate in a development from which all segments of our community take benefit.

I was on the hospital Board when I first realized that the Coastal economy was, to use a popular term, in a Doom Loop that threatened the viability of the hospital. There are many intertwined reasons for this but the most fundamental is what we call the Payor Mix. Of all the patients, 85% use Medicare or Medi-Cal and only 15% use private insurance. In a time when Medicare and Med-Cal are facing budget cuts, a hospital like ours can only survive if that Payor Mix starts to include more private insurance. Which of course translates to new, better paying jobs. (I was told that the hospital was flush with cash when the fishing and lumber industries were strong.)

For this and other reasons, we must focus on economic development in our community. There are competing needs, such as the environment and new development, but previous decisions have not taken the latter into serious consideration. Those residents who prioritize preserving our coastal character have had significant influence on these decisions but there are an equal number who see economic development as critical for our future.

I am optimistic that this will be the case. The present City Council seems to have a better perspective on these matters. I wish you the best when it comes time to make the tough decisions.

Best Regards,

John Redding  
Mendocino  
Former Treasurer  
Mendocino Coast Health Care District



**From:** Kathy Westfall <westfallservices@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2025 1:49 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Skunk Train Property Extension of MOU

To: Isaac Whippy, City Manager and City Council Members

I would like to express my support to extend part 2 of the MOU for the Skunk Train. I agree with Council members Rafanan, Hockett and Godeke to continue with the negotiations. This issue has been studied and re-examined long enough. Hiring more consultants is not going to change the issue. I think there is general knowledge of a certain level of pollution on the property, there is no amount of studying the issue that will make it go away. There have been many proposals to mitigate the problem, I think the best one is to fence off the area and Move on!

The mill closed 2002, since then this community has suffered through a severe economic slowdown. Lack of effective leadership has left it struggling for economic survival. We need to have a balanced vision of viable, sustainable and well paying jobs that provide a future for our younger generations so they do not have to move out of the area. We can maintain the natural beauty of the area and create a robust housing and job market. Both are possible at the same time.

Housing is a critical issue that has plagued this area for many years. Again due lack of leadership, indecisiveness and the constipated building and planning process, many local people have had to move out of the area for better opportunity and affordability.

Please move forward to provide affordable housing to those who would like to stay here.

The Skunk Train has been an asset to this community, we should support it. I just rode the Skunk last week and they provide a narrative for local knowledge and historical facts. I was quite impressed.

I urge the city council and mayor to support the Skunk Train business and move forward with a vision of our community that provides jobs and housing while maintaining our natural beauty.

Thank you,

Jeanette Colombi

**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** City of Fort Bragg <granicus@fortbragg.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 17, 2025 5:54 AM  
**To:** Paoli, Diana  
**Subject:** Skunk Train matters

Message submitted from the <Fort Bragg, CA> website.

**Site Visitor Name:** Stephen Dunlap  
**Site Visitor Email:** sdunlap@mcn.org

I just an email to the City Clerk but it did not go thru I think ? so here you go :

I think the single most important matter the city can do right now to bring tourist traffic to Fort Bragg is to get the Skunk Train tunnel open & the tracks open for the train to connect to Willits.

Period.

The Skunk Train is clearly a unique offering we can offer as a draw to our town in addition to many other reasons folks come to visit us here.

Of course affordable housing is an ongoing concern, including my 25+ employees who need a place to live.

Please move all efforts forward to help the train get fully operational once again.

You can discuss Mill Site matters later. There will never be any unanimous community support for ANY Mill Site plan. Get the train line open to Willits ASAP !

thank you 

**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** Jerry C <jerryfchilds@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 17, 2025 5:00 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Skunk Train

Skunk Train

Dear City of Fort Bragg:

I am writing to provide some input from a member of the community regarding the lengthy impasse between the City of Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train.

My understanding is that the the City of Fort Bragg has had persistent issues regarding: (1) lack of housing; (2) lack of jobs.

I request the City consider the following: (1) request to continue the stay of the lawsuit while the matter is being negotiated; (2) allow the tunnel restoration to resume forthwith; and (3) continue to negotiate in good faith with Skunk Train and involve a mediator as opposed to collaborating.

I see from my review of recent history that the Skunk Train operated for generations between Fort Bragg and Willits. During that time it transported passengers, lumber and other cargo. With the death of the lumber industry the Skunk Train became more of a tourist attraction.

Following the collapse of a Tunnel at about the 3.5 mile mark in 2016, the Skunk Train is now a purely local thing. In the meantime, the Skunk Train has secured a loan to reconstruct and reopen the tunnel to restore service between Willits and Fort Bragg.

Also, Skunk Train purchased the old mill site and took on liability for remediation of environmental issues from its prior use. Skunk Train seeks to develop the old Mill site into what looks to be a resort of sorts, with a hotel.

Fort. Bragg has been clear about its needs. It wants the revenue base. Skunk Train is also in the business of making money. People wanting jobs want money and want more housing that is less expensive.

This can be accomplished by working with Skunk Train. It will add revenues to the City coffers and provide a further boost for all who support the tourists coming in.

Because let us keep it real: tourism is the only industry keeping this wonderful area alive and viable. Fort Bragg can either work with what it has or it can continue on the road to becoming the next Cayucos.

Regards:

The Childs Family

**From:** Adele Horne <adelehorne@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 19, 2025 12:24 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; Jason Godeke; Albin-Smith, Tess; Peters, Lindy; noyofish@gmail.com; Rafanan, Marcia  
**Cc:** northcoast@coastal.ca.gov  
**Subject:** Public Comment on proposed MOU between City of Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train

June 19, 2025

To: Fort Bragg City Council  
cc: California Coastal Commission

RE: June 26, 2025 Public Comment Meeting on proposed MOU between City of Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train

It's apparent to a casual observer, by common sense, that The Skunk Train is a tourist excursion train. They have claimed to be a public utility and common carrier, in order to circumvent local control and oversight. They do not want to be bound by local zoning rules or to be subject to Coastal Act review. So far, the courts have agreed with the City of Fort Bragg that the train is not a public utility or common carrier. The railroad continues to make legal appeals, costing the citizens of Fort Bragg money. In addition, the reason for the original City Council and Coastal commission lawsuit was that the Skunk Train repeatedly refused to comply with local permit and oversight rules. Why would the City of Fort Bragg want to enter into any agreement with an entity that has already demonstrated a consistent pattern of flouting the law?

Now is not the time for the city to abandon its principled stance on this matter. By moving forward with the current Memorandum of Understanding, it appears that the city is conceding that the train is a public utility or common carrier. Why are we giving up, when we are winning the legal battle so far? The future of our city is too important to abandon now. The Skunk Train wants to turn the headlands into a tourist hub that will benefit their bottom line and that of the parent corporation, Sierra Energy. The community wants it to be an educational, environmental, and marine biology magnet and hub that will provide sustainable jobs, be inclusive of the indigenous community, and benefit the City of Fort Bragg and our children and future residents. The city must retain local control and oversight of the Noyo Headlands area, working to represent the public interest on these major issues:

1. A full and thorough remediation of the site, that will withstand the test of time, including projections of sea-level rise. For example, Millpond 8 should not just be capped. It needs full remediation. Follow through with what was already initiated. Finish the job.
2. No train or trolley on this beautiful expanse of land—this should be a space for pedestrians and bicycles only.
3. Create a solid plan for daylighting creeks and creating an adequate wildlife corridor.
4. The site should have a significant portion devoted to Pomo cultural purposes.
5. Create an ongoing public planning committee to provide input on how the public would like to see this land used.
6. The railroad is not a public utility or common carrier. It is a tourist excursion train, and must be subject to city and Coastal Act zoning rules and inspections.

The city has engaged in extensive public engagement projects about the Noyo Headlands in the past. A survey conducted by the city revealed that respondents prioritized restoration of open space which also creates jobs and is compatible with a 'higher' vision of development. Still, several years have elapsed, with many new residents arriving in the city. Circumstances have also changed substantially, now that the railroad holds the title to the land and has engaged in lawsuits with the city. The people of Fort Bragg want to be heard and to have a stronger voice in planning the future of the front 1/3 of our city. We strongly urge the City Council to represent our interests. We will not be railroaded!

Sincerely,  
Adele Horne  
resident of Fort Bragg

## Paoli, Diana

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**From:** mdouglas@mcn.org  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 19, 2025 4:19 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** tagwestfb@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Yes, it's the same letter but I added my two cents as well

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Yes, it's the same letter but I added my two cents as well

Date: 2025-06-19 4:10 pm

From: mdouglas@mcn.org

To: cityclerk@fortbragg.gov

Hello, members of the FB City Council,

My friend, Kathy Westfall, encouraged me to write a letter to support the current members to move forward for the future for our community.

But I want to add my involvement in Ft. Bragg for my whole life, from age 6 when I moved here from Nebraska and five years in college. I returned to Ft. Bragg in 1974 and have lived here ever since. I taught kindergarten, first grade, art/music, and second during 34 years so I am very familiar with Ft. Bragg traditions, culture, activities and economy.

I was raised during a time prosperity - the lumber industry was booming, fishermen were making a good living, towns and shops were occupied and thriving, families were building a stable future for themselves and their offspring, and crime was rare. My dad was the local, trusted banker and my mom was an Avon lady and homemaker. Those were the good ol' days.

It breaks my heart to see our town slowly disintegrate - empty storefronts, few jobs or a hopeful future for children and adults alike, the population dwindling as workers can't make it anymore. Something MUST BE DONE to reinvigorate our area for new businesses, more growth, shops filling up again, innovation and new possibilities.

Please consider the great responsibility you have in your hands - make YOUR time on the board beneficial to ALL. OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOU.

Thank you sincerely,  
Marcia Douglas, a Ft. Bragg resident for 65 years

"Greetings! We are writing this letter to ask for your help and make a dynamic impact on our town for the better. The future of the Mill Property and tunnel have for too long been extended by lawsuits, delays and endless personal congestion. Currently, we see an opportunity with this new incarnation of our City Council. They have shown a renewed potential to move forward, together, with a shared commitment to Fort Bragg's future. We know we don't all agree on everything, though I'm asking that we put aside our divisions and come together to help shape the next chapter of our town.

How we can make a change is two-fold: First, we ask that all of us please email the Fort Bragg City Clerk. The good news is that we will be bringing a copy of every email to the meeting, assuring that the entire City Council will also see so it cannot be ignored or swept under the rug. The purpose of the email is to tell the board that we support a continued stay of the current lawsuit to allow time for meaningful negotiations. Second, please finalize negotiations on Part Two of the



MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). We also ask that this comes with a development plan that prioritizes affordable housing and the creation of local jobs. We also urge swift action to remove the remaining barriers to tunnel clearing and begin long-overdue restoration. This bottleneck has already cost us valuable time and taxpayer dollars.

As you know, tourism is all we have to sustain our economy at this point. Hundreds of thousands of tourists come through our town annually and we must shift with this change. Almost half come for the Skunk Train, making it a cornerstone of our economy. Moving forward on the development will provide benefits to our entire community, so let us let our voices be heard. This isn't just a tourist attraction; it's a cornerstone of our identity.

We will be attending the meeting on the 26th of June, feel free to join us, in fact, we strongly encourage it. The last meeting held was disappointing and only had 20 people show up and all of them opposed to growth. It will be held at 6:00 pm and these letters need to be in by the 25th, no later.

Let's ensure Fort Bragg's future is shaped by unity, inclusivity, vision, and primarily action for the benefit of all residents, not just a select few.

Regards,  
Marcia Douglas, retired RW Elementary School teacher

**From:** Susana hennessey lavery <shennesseylavery@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 19, 2025 6:43 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; Jason Godeke; Albin-Smith, Tess; Peters, Lindy; noyofish@gmail.com; Rafanan, Marcia  
**Cc:** northcoast@coastal.ca.gov  
**Subject:** Public Comment on proposed MOU between City of Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train

June 19, 2025

To: Fort Bragg City Council  
cc: California Coastal Commission

RE: June 26, 2025 Public Comment Meeting on proposed MOU between City of Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train

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Now is not the time for the city to abandon its principled stance on this matter. By moving forward with the current Memorandum of Understanding, it appears that the city is conceding that the train is a public utility or common carrier. Why are we giving up, when we are winning the legal battle so far? The future of our city is too important to abandon now. The Skunk Train wants to turn the headlands into a tourist hub that will benefit their bottom line and that of the parent corporation, Sierra Energy. The community wants it to be an educational, environmental, and marine biology magnet and hub that will provide sustainable jobs, be inclusive of the indigenous community, and benefit the City of Fort Bragg and our children and future residents. The city must retain local control and oversight of the Noyo Headlands area, working to represent the public interest on these major issues:

1. A full and thorough remediation of the site, that will withstand the test of time, including projections of sea-level rise. For example, Millpond 8 should not just be capped. It needs full remediation. Follow through with what was already initiated. Finish the job.
2. No train or trolley on this beautiful expanse of land—this should be a space for pedestrians and bicycles only.
3. Create a solid plan for daylighting creeks and creating an adequate wildlife corridor.
4. The site should have a significant portion devoted to Pomo cultural purposes.
5. Create an ongoing public planning committee to provide input on how the public would like to see this land used.
6. The railroad is not a public utility or common carrier. It is a tourist excursion train, and must be subject to city and Coastal Act zoning rules and inspections.

The city has engaged in extensive public engagement projects about the Noyo Headlands in the past. A survey conducted by the city revealed that respondents prioritized restoration of open space which also creates jobs and is compatible with a 'higher' vision of development. Still, several years have elapsed, with many new residents arriving in the city. Circumstances have also changed substantially, now that the railroad holds the title to the land and has engaged in lawsuits with the city. The people of Fort Bragg want to be heard and to have a stronger voice in planning the future of the front 1/3 of our city. We strongly urge the City Council to represent our interests. We will not be railroaded!

Sincerely,  
Susana Hennessey Lavery  
Fort Bragg resident

## Paoli, Diana

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**From:** Hannah-Leigh Bull <llamadeara@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 20, 2025 6:34 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; Jason Godeke; Peters, Lindy; Albin-Smith, Tess; noyofish@gmail.com; Whippy, Isaac  
**Subject:** Item 8A of Agenda for City Council Meeting 6/23/25: 25-245 Progress Update on the Mill Site Planning Program  
**Attachments:** Noyo-Harbor-SLRRS-VRA-2025\_Admin-Draft-5.20.25.pdf

Dear Fort Bragg City Council Members, City Clerk, and City Manager:

Thank you for the dedicated service you give our community. I apologize for being unable to attend City Council meetings in recent times, now that my work schedule is extending into evening hours.

The Mendocino Voice published an article on 6/11/25 stating that the Council voted to move ahead with preparation of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Fort Bragg and Mendocino Railway about the development of the Noyo Headlands.

The Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. Mill Site Development Strategy document intended to support the creation of an MOU does not seem to address environmental and health impacts of expanding train business onto the headlands. This may be planned for future documents. Perhaps the concern about toxic impact I voice in this comment can be addressed in those future documents or announcements to the public.

As a healthcare provider, I monitor many factors that may be impacting the health and wellbeing of my Fort Bragg patients. In the last few years, I have written a couple of letters to the California Coastal Commission describing my concerns about the toxic contamination that the mill ponds provide and will not go into the detail of my letters to the CCC. Arsenic above allowable levels, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and other contaminants have been discovered in the mill pond area.

These toxins can result in liver damage, endocrine disruption, and immune disorders. Auto-immune disorders are especially harmful to the physical body, as most people know. However, mental health is also substantially impacted, as seen in the generalized fear and anxiety of individuals presenting with toxic exposure symptoms and immune disorders, with the attendant repercussions on families, work, and society. Endocrine disruption can result in depression and swings in energy levels, as well.

In addition to the mill ponds, the Environmental Science Associates in its attached draft report of Harbor Sea Level Rise states:

“The two census tracts in the City of Fort Bragg have a moderate environmental justice burden, with CalEnviroScreen percentiles in the 47th and 49th percentiles. These two tracts, as well as the tract bordering the city on the north and the east, all have higher incidences of asthma—in the 79th percentile. Low birth weight is in the 80th percentile for the southern tract within the city.”

It mentions other factors and percentiles, but I want to focus on asthma and low birth rate. People who develop airway inflammation from asthma and air pollution exposure during their formative years are at three times increased risk to develop mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression, than those without such conditions as they are developing.

Additionally, babies born with low birth weight are at risk for physical problems, developmental delays, and are more likely to experience mental illness later in life, according to an American Psychological Association analysis of research conducted over nearly 30 years.

Any agreement about how to proceed with development of the headlands must not only explicitly address how and when the toxic contamination of the existing mill ponds will be eliminated, but must also study why these high-percentile occurrences of asthma and low birth weight are occurring in our city and how to mitigate them before we pursue new development.

Also, the disposal of any waste from the creation of the industrial enterprises expected to provide jobs to the anticipated influx of humans to Fort Bragg must be addressed. A nightmare scenario could unfold if the City of Fort Bragg dives into new development with Mendocino Railway without first ensuring that Mendocino Railway has eliminated the toxic contamination from its former operations.

Thank you so much for your attention to my concerns and for your continued service to our communities.

Hannah-Leigh Bull, LMFT

Attachment:

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Hannah-Leigh Bull, LMFT  
[llamadeara@gmail.com](mailto:llamadeara@gmail.com)  
505-901-1476

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Draft

# SEA LEVEL RISE, TSUNAMI HAZARDS, AND EROSION RESILIENCE STRATEGY FOR NOYO HARBOR Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

Prepared for  
City of Fort Bragg  
416 North Franklin Street  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

May 2025



**Paoli, Diana**

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**From:** Row Boats <rowboats@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 20, 2025 7:13 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; Jason Godeke; Peters, Lindy; Albin-Smith, Tess; noyofish@gmail.com; Whippy, Isaac  
**Subject:** Mill site concerns

Dear City Council:

What ever happened to all the input from community members? I remember attending those events to gather input and it feels so disappointing to not have our input listened to. Also, how do the local Tribes feel about these plans involving the Skunk train and trolley line? Has there been adequate communication with the Tribes and process to get their input and approval? This is very concerning.

I've been interested in the plans for the former mill site here in Fort Bragg. I have also followed the news about the Skunk Train claiming that they are a public utility and therefore didn't have to follow local zoning/planning rules in developing the land, and an ensuing lawsuit where they were ruled against. I recently learned that the City Council is currently negotiating with the Skunk Train and is about to vote on whether to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with them about moving forward with plans to develop the site. My concern is that the current map shows an electric trolley going parallel to the Coastal Trail, and the Railroad doing a circle around a Hotel/Conference Center on the headlands. Looking at the public comments that have been logged over the years, most people want to preserve as much open space as possible, and most people at the March 2025 meeting objected to the train and trolley they saw on the map of the headlands. Why is that map showing the rail and trolley line still part of the planning document?

I feel strongly that we need to ensure that a full remediation of the site occurs, to make sure that the dioxins in the mill ponds don't harm current and future generations as the sea level rises. I am concerned that in readying the site for development, the City will be pressured to accept a scenario with minimal remediation. The community is very clear that we want a full cleanup of the toxins in the millpond. I urge you to vote "no" on moving ahead with the Memorandum of Understanding as it currently stands. It doesn't incorporate the public's concerns, and it cedes too much power to the railroad.

Respectfully,

Leu Leung



June 19, 2025

Dear Jason,

I have attached a copy of the City of Fort Bragg lawsuit with Mendocino / Sierra Northern Railway, it is the basis for the "Stay" of the lawsuit . It is a less than a six page read.

I am sending it to all City Council members, and the mayor as the deliberations regarding the lawsuit have been hijacked away from the specific issues stated in the suit.

I know teaching, being a family member, mayor and so much civic involvement takes more than 24 hours a day! I am a big fan of actually having paper copies in hand, is more convenient to read carry home and digest than spending hours on the computer or a miniature phone screen.

The lawsuit is short and spells out very clearly what the legal and development issues are, I think it's important to know the specific issues in the law suit and then ask oneself what is the stay, and resolution of the suit really about?

This is legal question they can only be resolved with knowledge of the legal issues. I will email this letter and a PDF of the complaint/lawsuit as well as bring a hard copy to the city for each one of you.

Thank you for your time and your service to the citizens and the future of Fort Bragg.

Sincerely,

Patrice Opatz

# SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)

FOR COURT USE ONLY  
(SOLO PARA USO DE LA CORTE)

**NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:  
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):**

MENDOCINO RAILWAY AND DOES 1-10, inclusive

**YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:  
(LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):**

CITY OF FORT BRAGG, a California municipal corporation

ELECTRONICALLY FILED  
10/28/2021 3:14 PM  
Superior Court of California  
County of Mendocino

By: *Dorothy Jess*  
D. Jess  
Deputy Clerk

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. ¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.

The name and address of the court is:

(El nombre y dirección de la corte es): SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO - TEN MILE BRANCH  
700 South Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

CASE NUMBER: (Número del Caso):  
21CV00850

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Russel A. Hildebrand (SBN 191892)

Krista MacNevin Jee (SBN 198650) JONES MAYER - 3777 N. Harbor Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92835; 714-446-1400

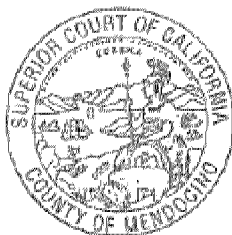
DATE:  
(Fecha) 10/28/2021

Clerk, by  
(Secretario) Kim Turner, Deputy  
(Adjunto) *Dorothy Jess*

(For proof of service of this summons, use Proof of Service of Summons (form POS-010).)

(Para prueba de entrega de esta citación use el formulario Proof of Service of Summons, (POS-010)). D. Jess

[SEAL]



**NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served**

1. ☐ as an individual defendant.
2. ☐ as the person sued under the fictitious name of (specify):
3. ☐ on behalf of (specify):  
under: ☐ CCP 416.10 (corporation) ☐ CCP 416.60 (minor)  
☐ CCP 416.20 (defunct corporation) ☐ CCP 416.70 (conservatee)  
☐ CCP 416.40 (association or partnership) ☐ CCP 416.90 (authorized person)  
☐ other (specify):
4. ☐ by personal delivery on (date):

By:   
D. Jess  
Deputy Clerk

JONES & MAYER  
Russell A. Hildebrand (SBN 191892)  
[rah@jones-mayer.com](mailto:rah@jones-mayer.com)  
Krista MacNevin Jee, Esq. (SBN 198650)  
[kmj@jones-mayer.com](mailto:kmj@jones-mayer.com)  
3777 North Harbor Boulevard  
Fullerton, CA 92835  
Telephone: (714) 446-1400  
Facsimile: (714) 446-1448

Attorneys for Plaintiff  
CITY OF FORT BRAGG

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

CITY OF FORT BRAGG, a  
California municipal corporation,

Plaintiff,

vs.

MENDOCINO RAILWAY AND  
DOES 1-10, inclusive

Defendants.

Case No. 21CV00850

**VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR  
DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE  
RELIEF**

(GOV. CODE, § 11350; CODE CIV. PROC., §  
1060)

**JUDGE:** CLAYTON BRENNAN  
**DEPT.:** TEN MILE

Plaintiff CITY OF FORT BRAGG, CA (“City” or “Plaintiff”) files this action seeking judicial declaration regarding the validity of the Mendocino Railway’s status as a public utility pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1060 and/or injunctive relief, alleging as follows:

1. The operations of the Mendocino Railway have been reduced over time and now consist of only the operation of out and back excursion trips starting in either Fort Bragg, California or Willits, California and therefore the Mendocino Railway is no longer entitled to status as a public utility, is in fact an excursion only railroad, and therefore is subject to the jurisdiction of the City of Fort Bragg and all ordinances, codes and regulations set forth in the City of Fort Bragg Municipal Code.

EXEMPT FROM FILING FEES  
PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 6103

1 **PARTIES**

2 2. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff City of Fort Bragg was and is a  
3 municipal corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State  
4 of California.

5 3. Defendant Mendocino Railway is currently listed as a class III railroad by  
6 the California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC"), and as such is subject to CPUC  
7 jurisdiction and has all legal rights of a public utility. At all relevant times herein, it has  
8 and does own and operate the "Skunk Train," as described herein, within the City of Fort  
9 Bragg, as well as owning and thus having maintenance and other responsibilities for real  
10 property relating thereto and also situated within the City of Fort Bragg.

11 4. Plaintiff is currently unaware of the true names and capacities of Does 1  
12 through 10, inclusive, and therefore sues those parties by such fictitious names. Does 1  
13 through 10, inclusive, are responsible in some manner for the conduct described in this  
14 complaint, or other persons or entities presently unknown to the Plaintiff who claim some  
15 legal or equitable interest in regulations that are the subject of this action. Plaintiff will  
16 amend this complaint to show the true names and capacities of Does 1 through 10 when  
17 such names and capacities become known.

18 **BACKGROUND FACTS**

19 5. The Mendocino Railway, aka the "Skunk Train," does in fact have a long  
20 and storied history of operations between Fort Bragg and Willits. Since the 1980s,  
21 Defendant's rail operations consisted primarily of an excursion train between Fort Bragg  
22 and Willits.

23 6. In 1998, the Public Utilities Commission issued an opinion that the  
24 predecessor owner of the Skunk Train, California Western Railroad ("CWRR"), was not  
25 operating a service qualifying as "transportation" under the Public Utilities Code because  
26 in providing this "excursion service, CWRR is not functioning as a public utility."  
27 (CPUC Decision 98-01-050, Filed January 21, 1998.)  
28

1           7.       Although the rail lines of the Mendocino Railway and/or the trains it was  
2 operating thereafter apparently did or may have had the capacity to carry freight and  
3 passengers from point-to-point, no rail lines presently have any such capacity. Moreover,  
4 the excursion train, even when it was running previously between Fort Bragg and Willits  
5 was exclusively a sightseeing excursion, was not transportation, was not essential, and did  
6 not otherwise constitute a public utility function or purpose.

7           8.       On April 11, 2013, Defendant's operations were disrupted following the  
8 partial collapse of Tunnel No. 1, which buried nearly 50 feet of its 1,200 feet of track  
9 under rocks and soil, the third major collapse in the over 100-year-old tunnel's history.  
10 The collapse of the tunnel eliminated the ability of rail operations temporarily to continue  
11 between Fort Bragg and Willits. On June 19, Save the Redwoods League announced an  
12 offer to pay the amount required to meet the fundraising goal for repair work, in exchange  
13 for a conservation easement along the track's 40-mile (64 km) right-of-way. The  
14 acceptance of the offer allowed the railroad to resume full service of the whole sightseeing  
15 line in August 2013.

16           9.       Tunnel No. 1 was once again closed in 2016 after sustaining damage from  
17 the 2015–16 El Niño, but Defendant had equipment at the Willits depot to allow the  
18 running of half-routes to the Northspur Junction and back (which had not been the case  
19 during the 2013 crisis), as well as trains running loops from Fort Bragg to the Glen Blair  
20 Junction and back.

21           10.      Plaintiff is informed and believes the estimates for the repair to reopen the  
22 tunnel are in the area of \$5 Million, and that Defendant has stated the tunnel repair will  
23 happen in 2022, but there are currently no construction contracts in place for that repair.

24           11.      Current operations of the Defendant consist of a 3.5 mile excursion out and  
25 back trip from Fort Bragg to Glen Blair Junction, and a 16 mile out and back trip  
26 originating in Willits to Northspur Junction – both of which are closed loop sightseeing  
27 excursions.  
28

1           12. In June, 2017, City staff deemed the roundhouse as so dilapidated that it  
2 may be necessary to demolish the building and rebuild instead of repairing. The City even  
3 offered to assist with funding to assist with those costs. Attempts to inspect the  
4 roundhouse by the County Building Inspector were refused and rebutted with a message  
5 from the Defendant that the City has no authority over a railroad. In 2019, when the City  
6 red tagged Defendant's work on a storage shed on the Skunk Train's property for failure  
7 to obtain a City building permit, the Defendant removed the tag and proceeded with the  
8 work. More recently in August, the City sent an email to Defendant to inform them that  
9 they needed a Limited Term Permit for a special event after 10pm that would create  
10 additional noise in the neighborhood surrounding the Defendant's property. Defendant's  
11 response was that they are "outside the City's jurisdictional boundaries and thus not  
12 subject to a permit".

13           13. Defendant is directly responsible for the activities occurring as set forth  
14 herein in connection with operation of the Skunk Train and the condition of real property  
15 in violation of law as alleged herein. Defendant is thus responsible for continuing  
16 violations of the laws and public policy of the State of California and/or local codes,  
17 regulations and/or requirements applicable to such operations and activities and/or have  
18 permitted, allowed, caused, or indirectly furthered such activities/operations in a manner  
19 in violation of law, and Defendant's use of and activities in connection with the Skunk  
20 Train and the condition of real property relating thereto, including the allowance or  
21 maintenance of such activities, operations and conditions in violation of law are inimical  
22 to the rights and interests of the general public and constitute a public nuisance and/or  
23 violations of law.

24                                   **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

25                                   **Declaratory and/or Injunctive Relief**

26                                   **[Cal. Civil Proc. Code §§ 1060, 526]**

27           14. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations in  
28 paragraphs 1 through 13 as if fully set forth herein.

1           15.     An actual controversy has arisen and now exists between Plaintiff and  
2 Defendant. Defendant has failed to comply with City's code enforcement efforts to have  
3 Defendant repair a dangerous building on their property. Defendant also claims its status  
4 as a public utility preempts local jurisdiction and provides immunity from the City's Land  
5 Use and Development Codes. City disagrees and maintains that, as an excursion-only  
6 railroad, Defendant is not a public utility, is not a common carrier, and/or does not provide  
7 transportation, and therefore Defendant is subject to the City's ordinances, regulations,  
8 codes, local jurisdiction, local control and local police power and other City authority.  
9 City is entitled to a declaration of its rights and authority to exercise local  
10 control/regulation over the property and Defendant and Plaintiff City has the present right,  
11 obligation and need to exercise such control, power and authority for the public interest,  
12 benefit and safety.

13           16.     A judicial determination of these issues and of the respective duties of  
14 Plaintiff and Defendant is necessary and appropriate at this time under the circumstances  
15 because the Defendant continues to resist compliance with City directives to repair and  
16 make safe the dangerous building on its property, and to comply with the City Land Use  
17 and Development Codes, and/or other valid exercise of City governing authority.

18           17.     No other adequate remedy exists by which the rights and duties at issue  
19 herein between the parties can be determined.

20           18.     The City and the public will suffer irreparable injury if the nature of  
21 Defendant's conduct, as alleged herein, is not determined by the Court and/or enjoined.

22           19.     Plaintiff City also, or in the alternative, seeks injunctive relief against  
23 Defendant and thus brings this action pursuant to California Civil Code Section 526 in  
24 order to enjoin or require Defendant to refrain from engaging in the conduct alleged here,  
25 cease violations of law, and/or to require Defendant to bring its property and operations  
26 into compliance with the law, as applicable.

27           20.     Unless and until restrained and enjoined by this Court's issuance of  
28 injunctive relief as requested herein, Defendant will continue to maintain nuisance

1 conditions and violations of law as alleged, to the substantial harm and risk to the health,  
2 safety and welfare of the public, and directly contrary to the lawful and valid authority of  
3 Plaintiff City to regulate such nuisance and dangerous conditions, and to compel  
4 compliance with applicable law.

5 21. Unless and until the activities alleged herein are restrained and enjoined by  
6 this Court, as requested herein, they will continue to cause great and irreparable injury to  
7 Plaintiff City's lawful exercise of jurisdiction and authority over Defendant's operations,  
8 activities, and its real property, and the conditions thereof, as well as allowing the  
9 continuation of injury and risk to the public.

10 **PRAYER**


11 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for relief as follows:

- 12 1. For a declaration that the Mendocino Railway is not subject to regulation as  
13 a public utility because it does not qualify as a common carrier providing  
14 "transportation.";
- 15 2. For a stay, temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction, and  
16 permanent injunction commanding the Mendocino Railway to comply with  
17 all City ordinances, regulations, and lawfully adopted codes, jurisdiction and  
18 authority, as applicable;
- 19 3. For costs of the suit; and
- 20 4. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.
- 21
- 22

23 Dated: October 28, 2021

JONES & MAYER

24

25 By:   
26 Russell A. Hildebrand  
27 Krista MacNevin Jee  
28 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
CITY OF FORT BRAGG



ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, State Bar number, and address):

Russell A. Hildebrand, SBN 191892; Krista MacNevin Jee, SBN 198650

JONES MAYER - 3777 N. Harbor Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92835

TELEPHONE NO.: 714-446-1400

FAX NO. (Optional): 714-446-1448

E-MAIL ADDRESS: rah@iones-mayer.com; kmi@iones-mayer.com

ATTORNEY FOR (Name): CITY OF FORT BRAGG

FOR COURT USE ONLY

ELECTRONICALLY FILED  
10/28/2021 3:14 PM  
Superior Court of California  
County of MendocinoBy:   
D. Jess  
Deputy Clerk

## SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

STREET ADDRESS: 700 South Franklin Street

MAILING ADDRESS: Same

CITY AND ZIP CODE: Fort Bragg, 95437

BRANCH NAME: Ten Mile Branch

CASE NAME:

CITY OF FORT BRAGG v. MENDOCINO RAILWAY

## CIVIL CASE COVER SHEET

☒ **Unlimited** ☐ **Limited**  
(Amount demanded exceeds \$25,000) (Amount demanded is \$25,000 or less)

## Complex Case Designation

☐ Counter ☐ Joinder  
Filed with first appearance by defendant  
(Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.402)

CASE NUMBER:

21CV00850

JUDGE: CLAYTON BRENNAN

DEPT.: TEN MILE BRANCH

Items 1–6 below must be completed (see instructions on page 2).

1. Check **one** box below for the case type that best describes this case:

## Auto Tort

☐ Auto (22)  
☐ Uninsured motorist (46)

## Other PI/PD/WD (Personal Injury/Property Damage/Wrongful Death) Tort

☐ Asbestos (04)  
☐ Product liability (24)  
☐ Medical malpractice (45)  
☐ Other PI/PD/WD (23)

## Non-PI/PD/WD (Other) Tort

☐ Business tort/unfair business practice (07)  
☐ Civil rights (08)  
☐ Defamation (13)  
☐ Fraud (16)  
☐ Intellectual property (19)  
☐ Professional negligence (25)  
☐ Other non-PI/PD/WD tort (35)

## Employment

☐ Wrongful termination (36)  
☐ Other employment (15)

## Contract

☐ Breach of contract/warranty (06)  
☐ Rule 3.740 collections (09)  
☐ Other collections (09)  
☐ Insurance coverage (18)  
☐ Other contract (37)

## Real Property

☐ Eminent domain/Inverse condemnation (14)  
☐ Wrongful eviction (33)  
☐ Other real property (26)

## Unlawful Detainer

☐ Commercial (31)  
☐ Residential (32)  
☐ Drugs (38)

## Judicial Review

☐ Asset forfeiture (05)  
☐ Petition re: arbitration award (11)  
☐ Writ of mandate (02)  
☐ Other judicial review (39)

Provisionally Complex Civil Litigation  
(Cal. Rules of Court, rules 3.400–3.403)

☐ Antitrust/Trade regulation (03)  
☐ Construction defect (10)  
☐ Mass tort (40)  
☐ Securities litigation (28)  
☐ Environmental/Toxic tort (30)  
☐ Insurance coverage claims arising from the above listed provisionally complex case types (41)

## Enforcement of Judgment

☐ Enforcement of judgment (20)

## Miscellaneous Civil Complaint

☐ RICO (27)  
☒ Other complaint (not specified above) (42)

## Miscellaneous Civil Petition

☐ Partnership and corporate governance (21)  
☐ Other petition (not specified above) (43)

2. This case ☐ is ☒ is not complex under rule 3.400 of the California Rules of Court. If the case is complex, mark the factors requiring exceptional judicial management:

- a. ☐ Large number of separately represented parties d. ☐ Large number of witnesses  
b. ☐ Extensive motion practice raising difficult or novel issues that will be time-consuming to resolve e. ☐ Coordination with related actions pending in one or more courts in other counties, states, or countries, or in a federal court  
c. ☐ Substantial amount of documentary evidence f. ☐ Substantial postjudgment judicial supervision

3. Remedies sought (check all that apply): a. ☐ monetary b. ☒ nonmonetary; declaratory or injunctive relief c. ☐ punitive

4. Number of causes of action (specify):

5. This case ☐ is ☒ is not a class action suit.

6. If there are any known related cases, file and serve a notice of related case. (You may use form CM-015.)

Date: October 28, 2021

Russell A. Hildebrand

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)

  
(SIGNATURE OF PARTY OR ATTORNEY FOR PARTY)

## NOTICE

- Plaintiff must file this cover sheet with the first paper filed in the action or proceeding (except small claims cases or cases filed under the Probate Code, Family Code, or Welfare and Institutions Code). (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.220.) Failure to file may result in sanctions.
- File this cover sheet in addition to any cover sheet required by local court rule.
- If this case is complex under rule 3.400 et seq. of the California Rules of Court, you must serve a copy of this cover sheet on all other parties to the action or proceeding.
- Unless this is a collections case under rule 3.740 or a complex case, this cover sheet will be used for statistical purposes only.

Page 1 of 2

**Paoli, Diana**

---

**From:** Lavender Ranch <info@lavenderranch.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:50 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** Kathy Westfall; Donna B  
**Subject:** Skunk Train Property Extension of MOU  
**Attachments:** Skunk Train Letter.pdf

I would like to express my support to extend part 2 of the MOU for the Skunk Train by the attached letter.

Thank you!

Donna Bayles

# BAYLISS RANCH

To: Isaac Whippy, City Manager and City Council Members

I would like to express my support to extend part 2 of the MOU for the Skunk Train. I agree with Council members Rafanan, Hockett and Godeke to continue with the negotiations. This issue has been studied and re-examined long enough. Hiring more consultants is not going to change the issue. I think there is general knowledge of a certain level of pollution on the property, there is no amount of studying the issue that will make it go away. There have been many proposals to mitigate the problem, I think the best one is to fence off the area and MOVE on!

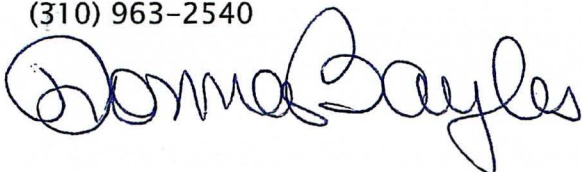
The mill closed 2002, since then this community has suffered through a severe economic slowdown. Lack of effective leadership has left it struggling for economic survival. We need to have a balanced vision of viable, sustainable and well-paying jobs that provide a future for our younger generations, so they do not have to move out of the area. We can maintain the natural beauty of the area and create a robust housing and job market. Both are possible at the same time.

Housing is a critical issue that has plagued this area for many years. Again, due lack of leadership, indecisiveness and the constipated building and planning process, many local people have had to move out of the area for better opportunity and affordability.

Please move forward to provide affordable housing to those who would like to stay here. The Skunk Train has been an asset to this community, we should support it. I just rode the Skunk last week and they provide a narrative for local knowledge and historical facts. I was quite impressed.

I urge the city council and mayor to support the Skunk Train business and move forward with a vision of our community that provides jobs and housing while maintaining our natural beauty.

Thank you,  
Donna Bayles  
(310) 963-2540



Mendocino Resident

**Paoli, Diana**

---

**From:** Kathy Westfall <westfallservices@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 5:24 PM  
**To:** Lavender Ranch  
**Cc:** City Clerk; Donna B  
**Subject:** Re: Skunk Train Property Extension of MOU

Thank you for your support!

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 2:49 PM Lavender Ranch <[info@lavenderranch.com](mailto:info@lavenderranch.com)> wrote:

I would like to express my support to extend part 2 of the MOU for the Skunk Train by the attached letter.

Thank you!

Donna Bayles

## Munoz, Cristal

---

**From:** max@mcn.org  
**Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 8:35 PM  
**To:** Lemos, June; Godeke, Jason; Rafanan, Marcia; Peters, Lindy; Albin-Smith, Tess; Hockett, Scott; Ahulani McAdam  
**Subject:** Fort Bragg Headlands comments

To The Fort Bragg City Council, and to the community,

I've lived here for 40 years and watched as Georgia Pacific closed the mill and the smoke-spewing chimneys stopped sending that plume up Oak Street...

lo and behold, we had blue skies!

We also had 400 toxic acres which took many years to remediate somewhat, and still there is a toxic brownfield left behind.

It is unthinkable that the people of Fort Bragg might lose control of this land again.

It was taken from the indigenous who cared for it for many years,  
and now with community planning and cooperation we can bring it back into harmony with its beautiful environs.

Fort Bragg does not need a tourist train outfit occupying and developing our headlands for their profit and by their design. The community needs to be involved and to be provided with an area clean of all remaining contaminants, with planning to preserve the natural beauty and environmental values. we will attract more long term value by staying environmentally focussed and non-commercial. The Skunk train is pulling a fast one on us and we can't let them get away with it. Their attempt to portray themselves as a public utility is ludicrous.

Planning for the development of the Fort Bragg Headlands MUST must include community input, review of proposals, and stakeholder participation whose voice is heard and considered.

Thank you,

Merry Winslow

**From:** Lezlie Kookenboo <lkookenboo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 24, 2025 9:25 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** tagwestfb@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Long Time Resident & Skunk Train Supporter

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing the city prior to the the meeting regarding the Millsite this coming Thursday June 26 at the cotton auditorium. I'm hoping for better collaboration and mediation when the same tired blustering individuals occupy the podium longer than their time allowed to spew misinformation that is incorrect. It is my observation that these meetings seem to allow the same negative minority to bluster their misinformation that has been corrected over and over again as false, yet they repeat this misinformation again and again. I.e. that the Skunk Train stole the sale away from city pennies on the dollar, or that the skunk train has done nothing to begin clean up on the old mill property, ect, ect, ect. I'm hoping maybe when these same repeat offenders attempt to occupy the podium with the same false allocations that perhaps they can be redirected to the facts and that their time is kept to what is allowed for all.

I have lived on this coast since 1972 and I'm very much looking forward to witnessing the city and the Skunk Train to work together to create a more vibrant, alive, visually appealing Fort Bragg. I have observed a new refreshing sense of professionalism and fair civility with-in city management and its board members. I feel with the correct collaboration with the Skunk Train the opportunity for more housing, more jobs opportunities and a city that would attract doctors to want to live and work here at our hospital. For the first time ever, I am excited that I might be able to experience Fort Bragg to be a quaint, thriving business community with plenty of housing and lots of job opportunities.

I'd like to thank the city for finding it's way to hearing us all and not just the loud, negative few that are against growth or progress. I respect their desire for no growth, but feel if everyone's needs and desires are taken into consideration that perfect plan can incorporate a little of every individual's needs.

Again, Thank you for the new refreshing attitude to hear us all. I'm very hopeful a plan can be agree upon and progress can begin.

Gratefully,  
Lezlie Kookenboo  
415 706 1562



## Paoli, Diana

---

**From:** Paul Clark <pclark@fortbraggrealty.co>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:33 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** Whippy, Isaac; Paul Clark  
**Subject:** FW: Support of the Skunk Train

To anyone concerned for the Skunk Train

I for one and certainly happy that there seems to be some positive movement for the skunk train as we know it locally it's been an important part of my family, and I know for thousands of other families. It has been through the decades, for freight for mail service and yes, for tourism. It is probably the first and most important producer of bed, tax, and other income to this community. And as mentioned before, by many, could in time of a disaster be the salvation we may need if all the roads were closed due to landslides or other disasters.

I don't really understand the opposition by some to keep this tremendous asset to the community muzzled. The city council in the past has supported the railroad financially and more recently they have gone out of their way to prohibit or make their efforts to reopen the tunnel, more difficult. It's time to end this petty squabbling and waste of money on attorneys, both city and state, and for the railroad. I look forward to the day when my great grandchildren can begin ride the skunk train and take the trip to North spur and maybe on to Willits. Who would possibly have anything against that? I question that person's sanity. Thank you and thank you for doing this workshop things are moving forward, and I would love to see the city do a survey of all the people visiting the coast if possible (the motels could help facilitate) do a quick survey on the importance of the skunk train to the visitors and also to the local community. Thank you.

## Paoli, Diana

---

**From:** Rhoda Teplow <rteplow@mcn.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:14 PM  
**To:** Godeke, Jason  
**Cc:** Lemos, June; Peters, Lindy; talbinsmithr@fortbragg.com; schoett@fortbragg.com  
**Subject:** Mill site development

Dear council members,

I would love the mill site to be cleaned up so it is no longer toxic.

After the cleanup I would propose that the land be used for housing for workers and working class families who live in Fort Bragg and on the coast.

Thank you for accepting our ideas and options.

Sincerely,

Rhoda Teplow

Room 107

707 Elm Street

San Carlos, CA 94070

707 964 2787

## Munoz, Cristal

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**From:** Paoli, Diana  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2025 6:26 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** FW: Mill Site Workshop 6/26/25

**From:** City of Fort Bragg <granicus@fortbragg.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:06 PM  
**To:** Paoli, Diana <DPaoli@fortbraggca.gov>  
**Subject:** Mill Site Workshop 6/26/25

Message submitted from the <Fort Bragg, CA> website.

**Site Visitor Name:** Peter McNamee  
**Site Visitor Email:** Peter\_mcnamee@hotmail.com

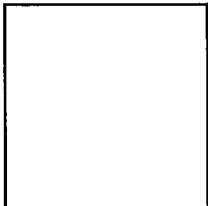
What the City/Railway's proposal fails to address is cleanup of the toxic contamination which are the legacy of George Pacific's lumber mill and the Railway's continuing operations.

Development means tens, maybe hundreds, of millions in taxpayer financed streets, sidewalks, parking, sewage, water, street lighting, policing, etc, etc, expenses the City taxpayers will have to assume. Yet, there is not even ballpark estimates of how much would be required and how it would be financed.

Meanwhile, if the City moves forward toward approving the Railways proposal it will also spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for legal and planning consultants with no assurance approvals from the Coastal Commission or the State Department of Toxic Substance Control can be obtained.

Bottom line - the City is not prepared or equipped to succeed carrying out a Master Development project of this magnitude and when it fails the City's residents will be left holding the financial liabilities and the headlands environment will be ruined.

The alternative is bunch less risky and will produce better outcomes. Go to trial and finish the lawsuit. When the court rules Mendocino Railway has no legal preemption from state and local regulation, the City can proceed to develop a development plan for the headlands on its terms applying the same methods and procedures as any other developer would need to comply with. What the City is doing is trying to invent a new solution to a problem that has already been solved. That is foolish and will end badly for the City.



## Munoz, Cristal

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**From:** shana JusticeWallace <shana.jwallace@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2025 12:15 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Millsite

Dear council members,

I support the city of Fort Bragg and train working together in the recently approved MOU. It is well past time for us all to work together for a viable future for our families and community.

Thank you for choosing to work together with the public input to make the millsite truly a part of our communities future. The division and arguments have went on for far too long wasting money that could be better spent benefiting our community.

LeShaundra Justice Wallace  
Sent from my iPhone

## Munoz, Cristal

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**From:** Concepcion Sanchez <cmonkai@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2025 1:32 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Skunk train

Dear,

As a lifelong resident of Fort Bragg, I have witnessed firsthand the significant impact the Skunk Train has had on our community. The sound of its whistle evokes a sense of hometown pride and nostalgia. However, I have come to realize that not everyone may share the same sentiment, and it's essential to consider the diverse perspectives within our community.

Fort Bragg has always been a working-class town, and as a parent, I want to ensure that our community can support the next generation of young adults. With the changing landscape of our town, it's crucial that we prioritize economic growth and job opportunities for local residents who are rooted in our community.

The Skunk Train is an integral part of our town's identity, attracting tourists and generating revenue for local businesses. Its presence is not only a nostalgic reminder of the past but also a catalyst for growth and progress. I firmly believe that the Skunk Train's development on the old mill site presents a significant opportunity for our community.

The proposed development, which includes retail, housing, and railroad-focused initiatives, has the potential to revitalize our local economy and create new opportunities for working-class families. While there may be concerns about the impact on our community, I believe that the benefits of this development would far outweigh the drawbacks. The Skunk Train already brings an estimated \$12 million annually in spending, supporting local businesses and jobs.

I support the Skunk Train's efforts to revitalize our community and look forward to seeing the positive impact it will bring. By working together, we can create a thriving community that benefits everyone.

Sincerely,

Concepcion Sanchez  
Sent from my iPhone

## Munoz, Cristal

---

**From:** John Gallo <gallo.ja@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2025 1:43 PM  
**To:** Godeke, Jason; Rafanan, Marcia; Peters, Lindy; Albin-Smith, Tess; Hockett, Scott; City Clerk; Godeke, Jason  
**Cc:** Paoli, Diana  
**Subject:** Re: Take 2: Letter and Slides for Fort Bragg Headlands Planning Meeting Tonight  
**Attachments:** Mill Pond Cleanup, Third Pathway, 2025-02-28.pdf

(With the attachment that was on the first version)

Please use this slightly revised letter compared to the one from a few minutes ago:

Hello City Council and City Clerk,

In my comments tonight I intend to refer to the letter I sent you in February, attached again for your convenience and to make sure it is in the public record. And I will refer to the following four slides, that are complementary.

There are 100's of beaches on our coast, but only one that you can easily stroll to from downtown. Imagine a tourist being here for a sunny lunch, having a few drinks, then wantint to walk to the beach. Unfortunately, that beach has been reduced to a small sliver of its natural self due to a rockpile berm keeping the summer sand away. The current plan is actually or essentially for that sliver of a beach to die, and to be inaccessible to the public. It is essential that any vision of the future of our town includes having that beach accessible to the public, and unpolluted by rock barriers that make it miniscule.

It is up to you to make sure this happens.

The bureaucratic process is losing sight of this simple truth.

This goes against common sense and what is best for the community.

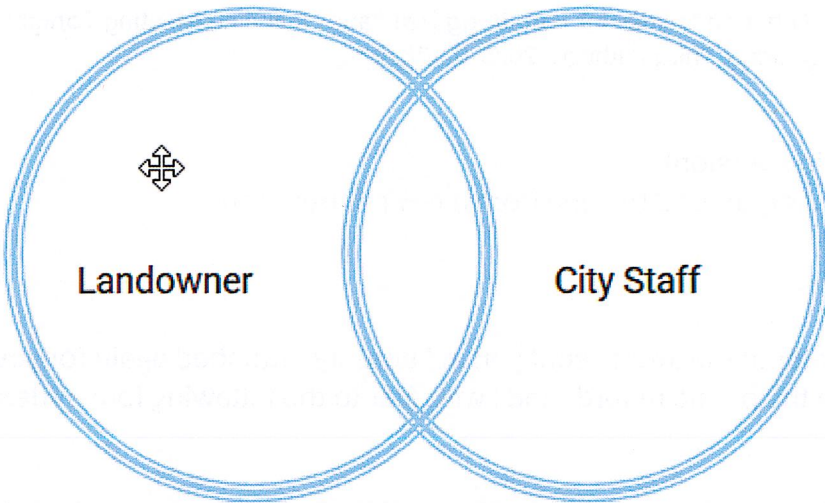
Fortunately, there is hope. The previous discussions only considered a single, highly infeasible option that would have allowed for the beach. There is now a much more viable and feasible Alternative for action, it just needs to be added to the list of options to consider regarding the Mill Pond Mitigation. Details attached.

My understanding is that it is currently not an alternative under consideration of the Mill Pond Draft Feasibility Study and Addendum, despite the request to the Landowner to add this new Alternative to the Plan.

Please do all you can to speed that public comment and review timeline along and make sure this alternative gets added to the study as part of the MOU agreement.

Thank you,

## Slide 1:

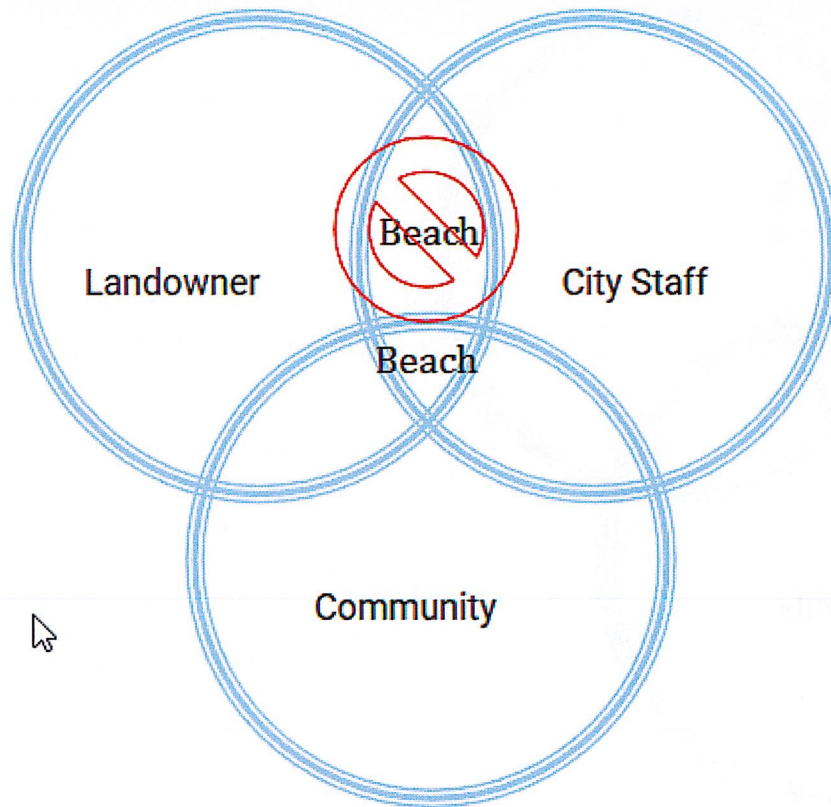


## Slide 2:

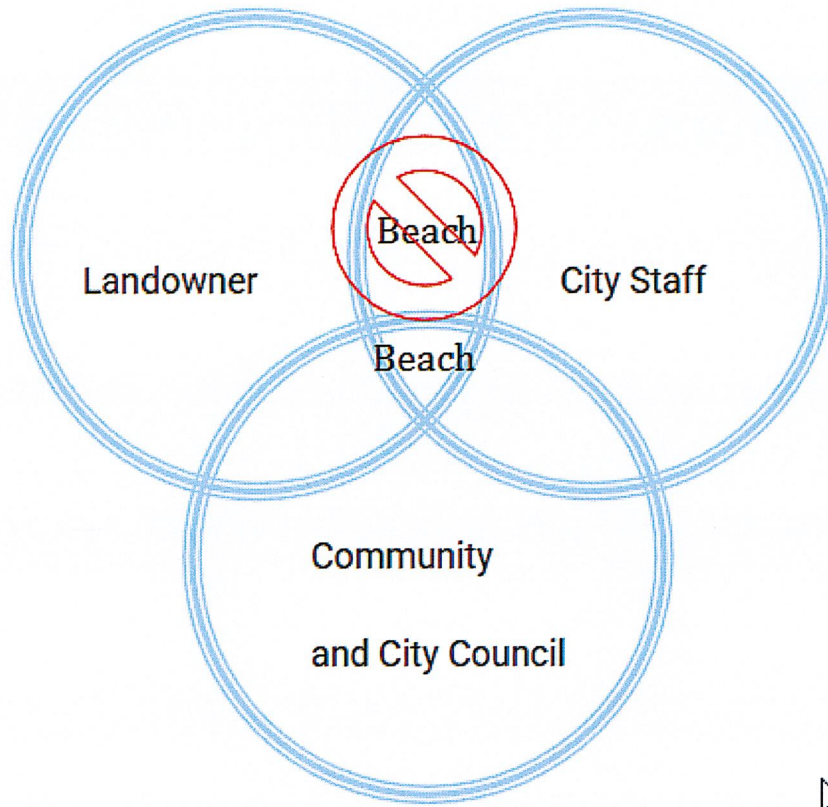




### Slide 3:



## Slide 4:



--  
John A. Gallo, Ph.D.  
Life Scientist and Geographer



**John A. Gallo, Ph.D.**

136 SW Washington Ave., Suite 202  
Corvallis, OR 973331  
Remote Office: Fort Bragg, CA  
john.gallo@consbio.org

February 28, 2025

To: To the individuals listed on the last page, from Sierra Railway Company, Mendocino Railway, Fort Bragg City Staff and Council, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Department of Toxic Substances and Control, California Coastal Commission Staff, Division of Safety of Dams, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Water Control Board

**Subject: Adding a "Third Pathway" for Mill Pond clean-up on the Fort Bragg Headlands**

This letter is towards the mission of a robust Fort Bragg economy via smart growth on the Headlands. Smart growth requires smart decisions. In practice it means maximizing the economic, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological opportunities of the Fort Bragg Headlands while yielding a sizable profit for the investors. It is the proverbial win-win scenario.

As of the latest public notification in August 2024 of the draft plan for studying the clean-up of the old Mill Pond (Pond 8),<sup>1</sup> there are essentially two proposed pathways.

One pathway is to truck the entire sediment load to Kettleman City in the Central Valley, then remove the dam, berm, and rock rip rap. The beach, lowland, and estuary could then return to its natural state, which would be great for the economy. But this is very costly, and an ethical grey-zone.

The other pathway has 7 alternatives within it, and is to leave the pond infrastructure in place, in one form or another. Leaving in place is costly, risky in the long run with sea level rise, storm waves, and earthquakes; and makes the public access options of the sliver of an ugly beach and rock rip-rap barrier quite underwhelming (See Figure 1). Some of the alternatives do not allow for any public

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<sup>1</sup> The 2019 Draft Feasibility Study is here:

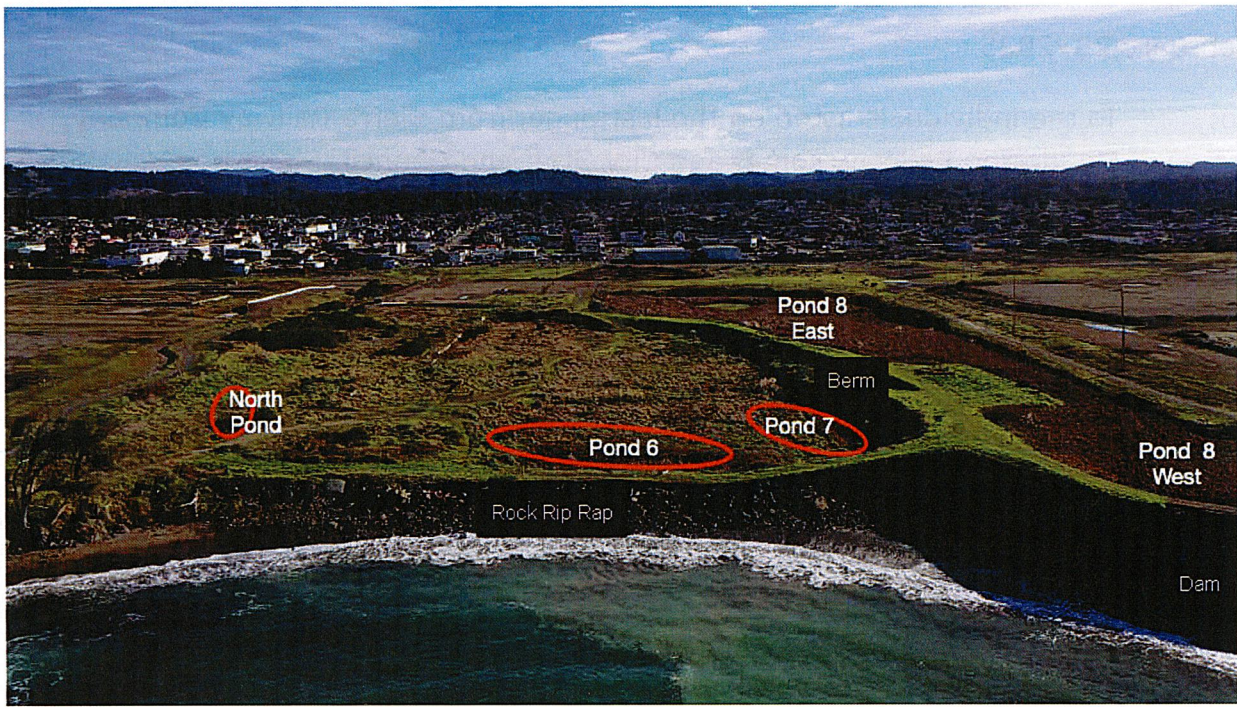
[https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/final\\_documents2?global\\_id=23240008&doc\\_id=60416830](https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/final_documents2?global_id=23240008&doc_id=60416830), and the August 2024 Draft Addendum has a table with the latest proposed alternatives to study:

[https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/deliverable\\_documents/6596363663/24\\_corr-out\\_OUE%20FS%20Add\\_Draft%20Alt%20List\\_20240830.pdf](https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/deliverable_documents/6596363663/24_corr-out_OUE%20FS%20Add_Draft%20Alt%20List_20240830.pdf)





access due to safety concerns. This on its own seems untenable and a violation of the Coastal Act and the California Coastal Commission mandate, but that debate is beyond the scope of this letter.



**Figure 1. Picture of the area in question from above Soldier Bay.** The old Mill Pond (Pond 8) is on the right, held in place by the dam and the earthen berm. Pond 7 is the most toxic but cannot be excavated without compromising the berm. The rock rip-rap armours Pond 7 and the berm from storm waves. The proposed alternative herein would remove all of this infrastructure and allow for a natural restoration of the beach and lowlands.

Leaving the infrastructure in place misses huge opportunities for increasing property values via improved recreational and public access, and, given new information, it appears to have a lower return on investment (ROI) than the third, not yet studied, pathway.

This Third Pathway is a hybrid between the two existing pathways. **It is to move the entire Mill Pond, and the infrastructure, and the lowland ponds, but only truck a very small percentage of the contents to Kettleman City (e.g. less than 10%, and ideally ~1%), not all the contents.** Details of how this could be possible are below.





Removal of the dam, berm, and rock rip-rap constraining the beach would in turn allow for the removal of the sediments from the most hazardous remaining pond, Pond 7, that is below the berm and hence cannot be fully removed currently.

*All this would allow for a clean slate, allowing for a much larger beach, a natural estuary, and a great place for people to go!*

This place being so close to Downtown and the proposed development of the rest of the Headlands will dramatically increase the property values and draw of the whole city, and especially the Headlands developments. It will make the Headlands truly world class and have a cascade of beneficial impacts. And of course it is better for us all and the ecosystem in the long run. Further, there are many federal and state funding streams that could fund this pathway.

Yes, there are unknowns that need to be resolved, but that is the point of a feasibility study; to examine the unknowns and to get some dollar figures to the required actions. Hence, please add this pathway to the list of alternatives in the Draft Feasibility Study Addendum now before the April 3 deadline for the revised addendum. This would be via one, two, or three alternatives detailed below.

## **Introduction**

For those of you that do not know me, and hence the context of this letter, here is an introduction. I grew up here on the Coast, left for college, started my career, went to graduate school, then to a post-doc on the other side of the world. In 2013 I got a career job where I could work remotely. At this point, with options galore, my wife and I chose to move here to the Mendocino Coast to raise our family. Hence, I love this place and am vested in its long term sustainability. As such, I co-founded and am Chair of the Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium (FBHC), a science-based group of organizations and individuals leveraging its technical expertise to promote informed and engaged communication within the community about the redevelopment of the Fort Bragg Headlands. Among other contributions, we have made this [map gallery](https://databasin.org/galleries/e3cfe7329ba04dbfb7434618daa919ab)<sup>2</sup>, including the map of OU-E with elevation levels and sea level rise indications. I am also Senior Conservation Scientist at Conservation Biology Institute, the organization that created the mapping platform for the above gallery. In a nutshell, we provide data-driven land-use solutions for meeting the needs of society and the environment at the same time. My CV is

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<sup>2</sup> <https://databasin.org/galleries/e3cfe7329ba04dbfb7434618daa919ab>



linked from my [staff page](#)<sup>3</sup>. In short, I strive to be a jack of all trades, master of some, and so I can help with the initial vision and research of this pathway, below.

### **How would the Sediments be treated?**

The soils and sediments could be treated via a workflow that could be determined during the revised feasibility study. Step 1 would be the initial, onsite treatment of the materials utilizing new technologies and discoveries that are in process compared to those around in the 2000s when this was last discussed. Ideally the cost, feasibility, and efficacy of each is determined. It may be that a combination or sequence of treatments is recommended and/or treating sediment and soil differently.

These potential treatments include:

- a. new technology like
  - i. ecospears ([ecospears.com](http://ecospears.com) ),
  - ii. HALT ([aquagga.com/ourtech](http://aquagga.com/ourtech)),
  - iii. Plasma ([onvector.us/technology](http://onvector.us/technology)),
  - iv. and others,
- b. [bacterial remediation](#)<sup>4</sup>, and
- c. [fungal remediation](#)<sup>5</sup>

See the webpages, footnotes and the Addendum ("Can fungal and bacterial approaches address dioxins and furans?") for more on this.

Step 2 would be the distribution of the treated materials to a variety of locations, depending on how many types of materials the load could be separated into. If three groupings, then the most hazardous remains could be shipped to Kettleman City, the less hazardous remains could be put in a Consolidation Fill on site, and the safe materials could be deposited in an alternate location nearby that is permitted such as an existing or new landfill in Mendocino County. Further, the cleanest group of the soils/sediment, if it meets adequate standards and gets the required permits,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://consbio.org/people/john-gallo/>

<sup>4</sup> A starting point: Use of immobilized bacteria for environmental bioremediation: A review.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2213343721008976>

<sup>5</sup> A starting point: Fungal bioremediation: An overview of the mechanisms, applications and future perspectives  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590182624000237>





could be deposited in the ocean.<sup>6</sup> The number of groups and the percentages of each waste type could be estimated during the Feasibility Study.

It is worth noting that the current sediments and soil load, untreated, are not hazardous waste. Hence the draft feasibility study says the load would need to go to a “non-hazardous waste disposal facility” if disposed of. It is estimated that the nearest facility that is guaranteed to accept this sediment is 400 miles away, which is the distance to the Kettleman City, which has a hazardous waste facility.

It is either unknown or unstated if one or more northern California, possibly Mendocino County landfills would accept this “non-hazardous” soil, especially in knowing how good it would be for the county economy. *This should be addressed in the feasibility study of this option, namely, knowing the characteristics of the soil/sediment that would be accepted by the various local, northwestern CA landfills*, and estimating what percentage of the soil/sediment load would meet that/those standards. It may be that only a small percentage of the load would be required to go to Kettleman city unless treated. If this is the case, the costs and the greenhouse gas emission estimates of the “truck to kettleman city” alternative could be updated accordingly.

Some of you may remember that we tried a Consolidation Fill for the ash from OU-A. But that failed. It did not fail in principle, but in engineering. It was engineered incorrectly and started gathering water so needed to be trucked away. This incarnation of the onsite Consolidation Fill can be engineered properly to allow adequate drainage. It could be on one of the higher locations on the property, well away from the threats of sea level rise.

Some of you may also remember that GP studied the possibility of fungal remediation sometime around 2010. The fungi studied were not able to solve the problems of dioxin and furans, but that does not mean this whole line of thinking should be off the table. Maybe the right fungus or approach was not studied. Maybe there is much better science on this in the last 15 years. Maybe the fungi can treat the other contaminants like the PCBs. See the above linked studies which are more current and comprehensive, and see the appendices. Regarding the new technologies, it could be that some have the option of consolidating the toxins, such as the indication that the plasma approach can treat the soil but results in dioxin

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<sup>6</sup> Waste introduced to the ocean is allowed to be settleable material as long as it meets standards, such as being tested and not being over any of the thresholds for degrading benthic communities or other aquatic life. My initial inquiries with the Water Board indicate you would want to talk with Mona Dougherty who is in charge of the NPDES permitting unit, Craig Hunt who is the case manager for the RWB for the cleanup site and to Gil Falcone CWA section 401 permitting lead. Email addresses available upon request. Details are in the CALIFORNIA OCEAN PLAN Revised 2019. [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/ocean/docs/oceanplan2019.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/docs/oceanplan2019.pdf)



and furan byproducts. If these could be contained and separated safely then that could be a promising workflow.

### **What about Stormwater Polishing?**

Removing the Old Mill Pond means that we will need to adjust to the new stormwater polishing requirements the same way that all the other coastal California cities that do not have a Mill Pond adjust. many are constructing ponds and/or bioswales for stormwater polishing. In this proposed pathway, we'll likely need to make at least one pond and/or a bioswale in the eastern portion of OU-E. Again, federal and state grants are available for this, and the long term benefits of this proposed pathway greatly outweigh this additional task.

### **How does this affect the vision for Creek Daylighting?**

Creek Daylighting can occur for all three pathways discussed above. In the case of this proposed Third Pathway, there should be two alternatives studied (one with creek daylighting and one without), and ideally three alternatives. The best but most expensive version would be a pond and/or bioswale at the headwaters of Alder Creek on the site, near Alder Street, and a pond and/or bioswale at the headwaters of Maple Creek on the site, near Maple Street. This would yield the most length of cleaned up daylighted creek. The intermediate version could have one pond/bioswale that is lower in elevation and treats both creeks at once. In either case, the daylighted creek(s) downstream of the stormwater polishing station(s), would be much much longer and more aesthetically pleasing than the one very small creek downstream of the eastern edge of the pond in one of the alternatives in the "keep in place" pathway.

### **Summary of Benefits of the Proposed Pathway:**

1. The proposed pathway will allow for removal of the dam/spillway, the earthen berm/dam that also holds the pond, and the beach rock berm that protects the lowlands below the pond.
2. This will allow for the removal of Pond 7, the most hazardous of all ponds, and one that could not be fully mitigated because it is under the earthen berm/dam.
3. This will allow for the public access to the lowland open space which will re-emerge
  - a. the ocean and tides will reclaim and shape the area.
  - i. it may or may not be a beach versus an estuary/beach hybrid.





4. This will be a much larger and easier to manage area of open space compared to the alternatives that include retaining some or all of the Mill Pond 8 (e.g., won't require continued monitoring and armoring in perpetuity).
5. This will be great for the local economy, ecology, quality of life, etc., and better in all these aspects than if even half the pond is still present and the lowlands need to be heavily managed and/or fortified.
6. For the funding sources that all alternatives are eligible for, this alternative is most ecologically and community beneficial and will be much more competitive and likely to get awarded than the other alternatives which involve continuation of a problematic structure. There are a variety of funding sources only available to this alternative.
  - a. These grants, which are for both feasibility studies and on-the-ground implementation, can dramatically offset the costs, making this alternative as expensive or less expensive for the city and Mendocino Railway than the alternatives, especially when looking at the long term.

In conclusion, all of this links back to the original premise of maximizing the economic, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological opportunities of the Headlands while yielding a sizable profit for the investors. This is the only alternative that does this.

I'd like to stress that I feel like this alternative appears to be the only one that would be a win for the landowner as well as a win for the government agencies, a win for the local economy, a win for public quality of life, and a win for the ecosystem.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Gallo".

John A. Gallo

#### **ADDENDUM:**

##### **Can fungal and bacterial approaches address dioxins and furans?**

My understanding is that the core challenge of this proposal is going to be to remove the dioxins and the furans. As a second round of exploration beyond the above letter, I had a conversation with Chat GPT to produce the below. As such, the statements are mostly accurate but not necessarily 100% so would need to be verified by the consultant. This is just a start.



PART I: “Hey Chat GPT: Are there proven fungal or bacterial approaches to removing dioxins or furans from the soil?”

Yes, there are several **fungal and bacterial bioremediation approaches** that have shown promise in breaking down dioxins and furans in soil. These compounds are highly persistent, but some microorganisms have demonstrated the ability to degrade them or enhance their breakdown under the right conditions.

## Fungal Approaches

1. **White-Rot Fungi (e.g., *Phanerochaete chrysosporium*, *Trametes versicolor*)**
  - These fungi produce extracellular enzymes like **lignin peroxidase, manganese peroxidase, and laccase**, which can oxidize and break down dioxins and furans.
  - White-rot fungi have been shown to degrade polychlorinated dioxins (PCDDs) and furans (PCDFs) by **oxidation and cometabolism** with lignin.
2. **Ascomycetes Fungi (e.g., *Aspergillus niger*, *Penicillium sp.*)**
  - Some filamentous fungi can help in breaking down chlorinated hydrocarbons through enzyme-mediated pathways.

## Bacterial Approaches

1. **Dehalorespiring Bacteria (e.g., *Dehalococcoides spp.*, *Desulfitobacterium spp.*)**
  - These bacteria use **reductive dechlorination** to remove chlorine atoms from dioxin and furan molecules, making them more susceptible to further degradation.
  - This process works well under **anaerobic** conditions.
2. **Aerobic Bacteria (e.g., *Pseudomonas spp.*, *Sphingomonas spp.*, *Rhodococcus spp.*)**
  - These bacteria can **oxidize** lower-chlorinated dioxins and furans, breaking them down into less toxic byproducts.
  - Some strains have been found to use dioxins as a carbon source under controlled conditions.
3. **Co-Metabolic Degradation (e.g., *Burkholderia*, *Mycobacterium*)**
  - Certain bacteria do not directly use dioxins for growth but can degrade them in the presence of other organic compounds (e.g., phenolics or biphenyls).

## Enhanced Bioremediation Strategies

- **Bioaugmentation:** Introducing specific bacterial or fungal strains into contaminated soil to speed up degradation.
- **Biostimulation:** Adding nutrients, electron donors, or oxygen to enhance native microbial activity.
- **Phytoremediation:** Using plant-microbe interactions (e.g., willow trees with rhizosphere bacteria) to degrade dioxins.



- **Composting with Fungi:** Some studies suggest composting with **ligninolytic fungi** enhances dioxin breakdown.

## Challenges & Considerations

- Dioxins and furans are **highly hydrophobic** and tend to bind tightly to organic matter, making bioavailability a limiting factor.
- Degradation rates are often **slow** and require optimized environmental conditions.
- Combining **fungal and bacterial approaches** in a **sequential anaerobic-aerobic system** has shown promise in maximizing degradation efficiency.

PART II: Chat GPT: Would you like specific studies or case examples related to these approaches?"

Me: "Yes"

Certainly, here are some notable case studies and research findings demonstrating the application of fungal and bacterial bioremediation techniques for removing dioxins and furans from contaminated soils:

### 1. Phytoremediation and Fungal Degradation in Vietnam

In Vietnam, soils contaminated with dioxins due to historical military activities have been a significant concern. A study explored the use of **aided phytoremediation**, combining plants with fungal inoculants, to remediate these soils. The research found that this approach effectively reduced dioxin concentrations, leveraging the synergistic actions of plant roots and fungi to degrade the contaminants. This method was highlighted as an eco-friendly and feasible solution for dioxin-contaminated sites. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6920798/>

### 2. Aerobic Bacterial Degradation in Contaminated Soils

Research has identified specific aerobic bacteria capable of degrading dioxins in contaminated soils. These bacteria utilize oxygen-dependent pathways to break down dioxin molecules, leading to less toxic byproducts. Studies have demonstrated that certain strains can effectively transform and reduce dioxin concentrations under controlled conditions, offering potential for in-situ bioremediation strategies.

<https://bioresourcesbioprocessing.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40643-020-0294-0?>

### 3. Application of Dehalococcoides in Reductive Dechlorination

The bacterium **Dehalococcoides** has been extensively studied for its unique ability to reductively dechlorinate highly chlorinated dioxins and furans under anaerobic conditions. Field applications have shown that introducing Dehalococcoides-containing cultures into contaminated sites can significantly accelerate the breakdown of these persistent pollutants,



transforming them into less harmful compounds. This approach has been successfully implemented in various remediation projects, highlighting its practical applicability.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dehalococcoides?>

#### **4. Comprehensive Bioremediation Studies by the U.S. Department of Energy**

The U.S. Department of Energy conducted extensive studies on bioremediation techniques to address soil contamination, including dioxins and furans, at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in California. These studies evaluated various biological treatments, such as fungal and bacterial applications, to reduce contaminant levels. The findings indicated that certain bioremediation methods could effectively decrease the concentration of dioxins and furans in soils, offering a potential alternative to traditional excavation and disposal methods. citeturn0search1

These case studies underscore the potential of fungal and bacterial approaches in the bioremediation of dioxin and furan-contaminated soils. While results are promising, the effectiveness of these methods can vary based on site-specific conditions, and further research is ongoing to optimize and validate these bioremediation strategies.

[https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/Bioremediation%20Study%20Final%20Report%20May%2C%202015.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/Bioremediation%20Study%20Final%20Report%20May%2C%202015.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

~ ~ ~

#### **Sent to:**

Christopher Hart  
Vice President Business Development  
Sierra Railroad Company

Robert Pinoli  
President  
Mendocino Railway

Isaac Whippy  
City Manager  
City of Fort Bragg

Jason Godeke  
Mayor and Mill Site Ad Hoc Committee Member  
City of Fort Bragg

Lindy Peters  
Councilmember and Mill Site Ad Hoc Committee Member  
City of Fort Bragg



Fort Bragg City Council, and Public Record, % Diana Paoli  
City Clerk  
City of Fort Bragg

Valerie Stanley  
Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians

Morgan Bigelow  
Project Manager  
Department of Toxic Substances Control

Asha Setty  
Public Participation Specialist  
Department of Toxic Substances Control

Melissa Kraemer  
North Coast District Manager  
California Coastal Commission

Daniel Harrington  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Northern Region

Nicole Castillo, PE  
Water Resources Engineer  
Division of Safety of Dams

Sharon K. Tapia, P.E.  
Division Manager  
Division of Safety of Dams  
% Nicole Castillo, PE

Gil Falcone  
Supervisor Southern 401 Certification Unit  
Water Control Board



6/26/25

To The Fort Bragg City Council, and to the community,

I've lived here for 40 years and watched as the smoke-spewing chimneys left town when the mill closed up shop, and suddenly, we had blue skies!

No more plume drifting up Oak Street!

We also had a toxic brownfield left behind. The absence of the corporate owner meant the community could begin to restore and heal this treasured land. It is unthinkable that the people might lose control of the headlands again.

It was taken from the indigenous inhabitants who cared for it for many years, and now with community planning and cooperation we can bring it back into harmony with its beautiful environs.

It has been proven in court that Mendocino Railroad is not a public utility. They have been evading environmental oversight blatantly in their railyard operations for years, claiming exemption from rules that protect soil, water, and air quality.

We might choose to use this land for model environmental and residential projects that can make the best use of its' unique potential. Wetlands, Environmental education opportunities, new technologies, scientific study, wildlife habitat. But first it must be restored. A promise of ongoing planning with the community is an empty promise that has no enforcement or guarantees.

Planning for the development of the Fort Bragg Headlands MUST must include community input, review of proposals, and stakeholder participation whose voice is heard and considered.

Please, do not surrender this land under duress.

Thank you ,

Merry Winslow