



Keeping Northwest California wild since 1977

July 21, 2011

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501-4484

Re: Water Resources Element of Humboldt County's Draft General Plan Update

Dear Commissioners:

In light of this evening's hearing on the Water Resources Element of Humboldt County's Draft General Plan Update, the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) submits this letter for the Planning Commission's consideration.

We implore the Planning Commission to prioritize the recovery of salmonids and impaired waterways in the Humboldt County General Plan Update process. The successful recovery of salmon will be the barometer by which our communities will measure the success of our efforts to be responsible inhabitants of this region.

Courageous steps must be taken to guide future economic and residential development in Humboldt County to increase the possibilities of securing the recovery of salmon on our landscape.

For the sake of efficiency, EPIC desires to communicate to the Planning Commission that we are aware of the efforts of the "Healthy Watersheds Working Group," and that we are in support of the comments and the suggested edits to the Water Resources Element Plan Alternatives Comparison Chart that were submitted by the organizations that make up the "Healthy Watersheds Working Group."

We do want to include a few points that, from the point of view of EPIC, should be taken particularly seriously in order that this process result in the proper meshing of economic and environmental planning.

EPIC strongly supports the adoption of a "Watershed Planning" framework in order to more adequately identify the interrelated nature of land use and watershed health. Utilizing a collaborative watershed-based approach to planning is a much-needed step to collect relevant

Environmental Protection Information Center

145 G Street, Suite A, Arcata, California 95521

Tel: (707) 822-7711

Fax: (707) 822-7712

www.wildcalifornia.org

data and attend to the barriers interfering with watershed recovery. Along these lines, we also support identification and protection of critical watershed areas and groundwater recharge areas.

We also believe that educational efforts and incentive-based programs should be developed to encourage Best Management Practices relating to existing development; particularly to address issues related to stormwater management, private road maintenance, and water withdrawals. As well, practices such as greywater reuse, rainwater harvest, native plant landscaping, bioswales and raingardens should all be encouraged. These strategies can translate into substantial benefits to watershed health and can be utilized in both urban and rural areas.

Lastly, EPIC strongly supports the restoration of flow rates to all rivers of the County. We support the County taking an active role in advocating for improved flow release from the Klamath, Trinity, and Eel Rivers. With regard to exports we believe that, while the County may not have the authority to approve exports in and of themselves, the County does have the authority over land use projects associated with water exports. As such we recommend that the County require Conditional Use Permits for water-export related structures and facilities.

Thank you very much for taking our brief comments into consideration. Again, we are aware of the efforts of the “Healthy Watersheds Working Group” to communicate to the Planning Commission specific language that will strengthen the conservation and environmental protection potential of the Water Resources Element of Humboldt County’s Draft General Plan Update, and we whole heartedly encourage the planning commission to incorporate this language into the final version of the update.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Graham Hughes".

Gary Graham Hughes
Executive Director