

WE ARE UP SUPPORTER LETTERS JUNE 2025

	FIRST	LAST	AFFILIATION
1	Judge Abby	Abinati	Yurok Tribal Judge
2	Mendie	Ballester	Parent - HCOE
3	Kelsey	Boyd	Behavior Health Coordinator
4	Jennifer	Budwig	Redwood Capital Bank
5	Wesley	Chesbro	Past Senator of California
6	Micaela	Connery	The Kelsey - National Disabilitiy Group
7	Wendy	David	Matsen Insurance
8	Cheryl	Dobbins	MFT
9	Pamela	Dressler	Cypress Grove Cheese
10	Sara	Dronkers	CEI Humboldt Area Foundation
11	Keith	Flamer	President College of the Redwoods
12	Kler	Flicker	BCBA
13	Jason	Garlick	Attorney At Law
14	Tim	Hooven	Hooven & Co.
15	Charlie	Jordan	Kinetic Koffee
16	Jolene	Konnersman	Attorney - Board Member
17	Claudia	Lima	Board Member - Parent
18	John	McBeth	O & M Industries
19	Jackie	McBeth	Supporter
20	Fatima & Chris	Naylor	Humboldt Mortgage - Parents
21	Heather	Odle	Redwood Coast Regional Center
22	Stephanie & Scott	Phelps	S & S Phelps Construction
23	Jason	Ramos	Chair Blue Lake Rancheria
24	Peg	Smith	Founder Cowgirl Creamery
25	Tory	Starr	Open Door Clinic
26	Linda	Sundberg	GRS Inc.
27	Ross	Welch	North Edge Community Development
28	Hannah	Winans	Trinity Realty
29	Len & Robin	Wolff	MFT & LCSW
30	Robert	McLaughlin	Supporter
31	Heidi & Michael	McLaughin	Bettendorf Trucking



YUROK TRIBE

190 Klamath Boulevard • Post Office Box 1027 • Klamath, CA 95548



Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages, which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Mendie Ballester
915 Maxwell St.
Fortuna, CA 95540

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There is an immense need for We Are Up in our community for multiple reasons but specifically because it addresses the need for community and the lack of accessible housing for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations.

As the mother of an autistic, teenage daughter, the current lack of support for adults with disabilities in our area is a very real concern. However, the We Are Up project plan and everything that the organization is creating has helped ease some of those fears and has made us excited and hopeful for the future opportunities. Humboldt County offers so many supportive opportunities to our youths with disabilities. It is exciting and encouraging to see We Are Up addressing the accessible housing issue for adults with disabilities in Humboldt County.

The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population and currently struggle to find appropriate housing. These rates are higher than the national averages, which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively.

Currently there is very little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be utilized by the entire community and will be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

Thank you for your continued service to the community.

Sincerely,



Mendie Ballester
Administrative Assistant, Educational Services, Humboldt County Office of Education
Parent of an autistic, teenage daughter

Kelsey Boyd
1705 Bird Ave, McKinleyville CA 95519
513-316-6582

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Kelsey Boyd, and I'm writing in strong support of the We Are Up development proposed for McKinleyville.

In my work as a coordinator in the behavioral health field here in Humboldt County, I regularly speak with families and caregivers who describe themselves as isolated and exhausted. These are families caring for loved ones who have different ways of communicating their needs and emotions - individuals who often struggle to access the systems many of us move through with ease: schools, apartments, jobs, and transportation.

Many of these individuals and their caregivers have spent years isolated within their own homes. This deepens the emotional, financial, and psychological toll of their daily lives and often leaves them feeling disconnected from the broader community. A number of these families are caught in a fragile cycle - dependent on In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) to survive, while housing access is directly tied to their ability to serve as full-time caregivers, regardless of whether that arrangement offers the best quality of life for those involved.

The We Are Up development presents a bold and compassionate alternative. This project would not only bring a much-needed source of hope to the neurodiverse and disability communities in Humboldt - it would also enrich the social, economic, and cultural fabric of McKinleyville as a whole.

By introducing a significant number of new housing units, We Are Up directly addresses our community's housing shortage. Its integration of community-supported agriculture, access to nature, and proximity to small businesses builds on McKinleyville's roots and growing economic core while offering something visionary: a place where individuals of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds can thrive.

This project is more than a development. It is a step toward a more inclusive and resilient Humboldt County, one that recognizes the dignity of all its residents and reimagines what's possible when we design with care and intention.

I strongly encourage the Commission to support the We Are Up project and help bring this meaningful vision to life in Humboldt.

Sincerely,
Kelsey Boyd

Jennifer Budwig

402 G Street Eureka, CA 95501

(707) 444-9817

Humboldt County Planning Commission

3015 H Street

Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. First and foremost, we are so lucky to have someone like Mary Keehn that is willing to take on this project to providing housing and services for some of our most vulnerable populations. As you are aware, housing in Humboldt County is one of our greatest challenges, and is especially difficult for the populations We Are Up will be servicing which includes adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville.

Mary Keehn and her board of directors have been very methodical on how they are approaching the project, the layout, the impact and the support to our community. We are fortunate to have someone with the vision and fortitude to undertake this project so please vote in favor of it and support them moving forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Budwig

Wesley Chesbro
California State Senator, Retired
1714 Bella Vista Rd
PO Box 2691
Mckinleyville CA 95519
weschesbro@yahoo.com

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka Ca 95501

Dear Commissioners,

As a resident of Mckinleyville a few blocks away from the proposed project, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the We Are Up effort to build a supportive community for adults with disabilities and seniors.


As a member of the California Legislature I Chaired the Senate Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities and worked to support the development of housing to meet the housing needs of this vulnerable population. While we experienced success in other parts of California, to date Humboldt County has not been able to secure such a safe and accessible housing project.

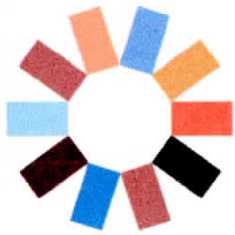
In my work in the Legislature I learned that the greatest obstacle to persons with disabilities experiencing the rich and fulfilling lives we all strive for is not their disabilities, but rather it is our society's inability, often due to stigma and ignorance to offer the support and services they need to live and thrive independently.

With Humboldt County's higher than average percentage of seniors and persons with disabilities We Are Up will meet this pressing need.

I am also pleased with the We Are UP design which preserves a beautiful piece of open space while at the same time providing for badly needed housing.

I strongly urge your approval of this important project.


Wesley Chesbro



The Kelsey

Micaela Connery
The Kelsey
1 Sansome Street, 14th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104

June 9, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing, as CEO and Co-founder of The Kelsey, to express our enthusiastic and unqualified support for the We Are Up inclusive housing community proposed in McKinleyville.

The Kelsey is a nationally recognized nonprofit that advances disability-forward housing solutions through development, advocacy, and technical assistance. We have successfully completed two inclusive, affordable housing communities in the Bay Area - *The Kelsey Ayer Station* in San Jose and *The Kelsey Civic Center* in San Francisco - in partnership with local Regional Centers, the cities of San Jose and San Francisco, and the State of California. These communities demonstrate how disability-inclusive housing can be financially feasible, socially impactful, and replicable across geographies.

We Are Up engaged The Kelsey in 2023 to serve as a technical assistance and development advisor, and we've worked closely with them ever since. Based on our experience and expertise, we've supported We Are Up through the predevelopment, design, and planning phases, and we are continuing to provide strategic guidance as they move into construction and financing.

Our partnership has included:

- A **comprehensive feasibility analysis**, confirming the financial viability of a 70-unit inclusive community, including public and private financing paths such as 9% and 4% LIHTC, various federal and HCD programs, DDS grants, and concessionary equity, among others.

The Kelsey is a 501c3 nonprofit organization
[Learn more at thekelsey.org](https://thekelsey.org)

The Kelsey

- A **series of co-led design charrettes** focused on cognitive access needs and universal design strategies - ensuring that residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and other disabilities are considered at every level of design.
- **Hosting the We Are Up team at our San Jose community**, where they toured The Kelsey Ayer Station, met with current and future residents, and participated in collaborative design workshops to adapt best practices to the Humboldt context.
- Ongoing support with **capital stack development**, public financing navigation, and co-developer structuring - ensuring We Are Up is positioned to attract the investment and partnerships needed to bring this vision to life.

This is more than a housing project. It is a transformative model for rural, intergenerational, and disability-forward community development. The proposed design includes ADA-compliant and adaptable units, a community center, on-site job training opportunities, and sustainable features like a commercial greenhouse and meadow trail. With 25% of units prioritized for residents with I/DD, and thoughtful consideration for healthcare workers, older adults, and low-income households, We Are Up is responding directly to community needs while advancing equity and inclusion.

We Are Up's commitment to meaningful inclusion, sustainable development, and affordability is rare - and it has been a privilege to walk alongside them in shaping this vision. We strongly urge the Commission to approve this project and help bring this nationally significant model to life in Humboldt County.

Sincerely,



Micaela Connery
Chief Executive Officer | Co-founder | The Kelsey
(415) 413-3902 | micaela@thekelsey.org

The Kelsey is a 501c3 nonprofit organization
Learn more at thekelsey.org

matsen
insurance brokers



June 9th, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: Letter of Support for We Are Up Community Project in McKinleyville

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed We Are Up community project in McKinleyville, and to respectfully urge your approval of their plan going before the Planning Commission on June 26th.

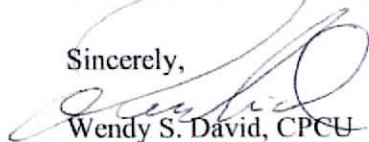
We Are Up is not just a nonprofit—it's a visionary and much-needed solution for some of Humboldt County's most pressing challenges. Their project addresses the acute lack of accessible and supportive housing, especially for some of our most vulnerable populations. Adults under 65 with a disability make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population, and seniors represent 19.2%—both significantly higher than the national averages of 8.7% and 16.8%, respectively. These individuals often struggle to find safe, appropriate housing that meets their unique needs.

Currently, there are few supportive housing options for adults with disabilities in the region, and no day programs available north of Arcata. The We Are Up project directly addresses these gaps. Their thoughtful inclusion of a Community Center and commercial kitchen not only serves the residents but also opens up opportunities for the greater McKinleyville community to gather, share resources, and connect. I also appreciate the preservation of open space in the new site design, which reflects a careful balance of development and community integrity.

As a supporter and donor of We Are Up, I believe in their mission and their capacity to execute it with compassion, sustainability, and lasting impact. Their work uplifts lives and strengthens our entire county, and this project is a meaningful step forward for everyone.

Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this vital project. Please feel free to reach out if additional input is needed.

Sincerely,



Wendy S. David, CPCU
President
Matsen Insurance Brokers, Inc.

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501
RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. The need for communities such as the proposed We Are Up community is so necessary, as it addresses the lack of accessible housing which provides a healthy community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable and often invisible populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing. I would also like to add that the National average is something that certainly needs attention. We Are Up will help provide a positive model which will not only provide necessary living needs, but also help create a dignified living atmosphere for the residents.

The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the residents and community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. The new design of We Are Up is beautiful and provides much open space.

Thank you for you considering We Are Up as a positive addition to Humboldt County,

Sincerely,

Cheryl Dobbins
retired MFT



June 9, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I'm eager to show my support for We Are Up. I really believe in this project! I've known Mary Keehn, the visionary behind We Are Up, for over two decades. She founded Cypress Grove in her kitchen many years ago and grew it to be a nationally distributed, much-loved and respected company, renowned for its goat cheeses, especially the iconic Humboldt Fog. Now she has set her sights on creating an equally vibrant vision, one that will also touch and enrich many: an innovative community for people with and without disabilities.

There's an axiom in the start-up world: bet on the person more than the idea. In this case, however, it's a good odds-on-bet for both the founder *and* the idea. Mary has already assembled a talented and dedicated Board of Directors to help with steering and oversight. Now she's applying for permits to bring her inspiring vision to life. Your approval is the necessary next step to move this project forward.

Please throw your support behind We Are Up. Your approval will give this vision momentum, setting it on its way towards leveraging multi-sector public and private funding to support future programs and expansion. These services will help fill critical gaps in the continuum of care for people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our rural Northern California community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Pamela Dressler
President and Managing Director

1330 Q STREET ARCATA, CA 95521



CYPRESSGROVECHEESE.COM



363 Indianola Road, Bayside, CA 95524
info@hafoundation.org
(707) 442-2993

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

June 5, 2025

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation to express our wholehearted support for *We Are Up* and their visionary efforts to provide a much-needed housing option for vulnerable populations in Humboldt County.

As a community-based organization, we see firsthand the challenges our older residents face, especially those living in rural areas. When driving is not an option and homes are not designed for people with mobility issues, isolation and health risks increase dramatically. *We Are Up* is addressing these issues head-on by creating accessible housing that fosters connection and dignity.

There is a clear and growing need for this kind of supportive environment. In Humboldt County, 13.2% of adults under 65 live with a disability, and 19.2% of our population are seniors—both figures notably higher than the national average. Yet, despite this, there are very few housing options that truly meet their needs. The lack of supportive housing and the absence of day programs north of Arcata only deepens the gap.

The addition of a Community Center and commercial kitchen will not only serve the residents of *We Are Up* but will also be a valuable resource for the broader McKinleyville community. We are especially appreciative of the thoughtful design and commitment to preserving open space on the property.

We are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with *We Are Up* to build a sustainable, healthy, and inclusive environment where our differently abled members and seniors can age in place with grace and community. This project is a true gift to Humboldt County, and we are proud to stand behind it.

On behalf of our community, we offer our full and enthusiastic endorsement.

Sara Dronkers
Chief Executive Officer

June 5, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the *We Are Up* community project in McKinleyville. At College of the Redwoods, we are deeply invested in the well-being of our broader community. I believe this project will improve quality of life, foster belonging, and model what inclusive development can look like in rural areas like ours.

The need for a project like *We Are Up* in our region cannot be overstated. Humboldt County faces a significant shortage of supportive housing, particularly for adults under 65 with disabilities and for our growing senior population. These groups make up 13.2% and 19.2% of our population respectively — both well above the national averages. Yet, services and housing options for these individuals remain limited, especially in northern parts of the county.

We Are Up thoughtfully addresses these gaps by offering not only housing, but also a sense of community, dignity, and purpose. The inclusion of a community center and commercial kitchen will provide valuable space for programs and gatherings that bring people together. I'm especially impressed by the project's design and its commitment to maintaining open green space — an asset to all who call McKinleyville home.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering support for this visionary and much-needed initiative.

Sincerely,



Keith Flamer, PhD
President/Superintendent

www.redwoods.edu

Eureka

7351 Tompkins Hill Rd
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 476-4100

Del Norte

883 W. Washington Blvd
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 465-2380

Eureka Downtown

525 D Street
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 476-4500

Klamath-Trinity

65 Orchard St.
Hoopa, CA 95546
(530) 625-4821

JASON M. GARLICK
ATTORNEY AT LAW
1805 CENTRAL AVENUE
MCKINLEYVILLE, CALIFORNIA, 95519
TEL: (707) 840-0909
FAX: (707) 840-0979
EMAIL: JGARLICK@GARLICKLAW.COM

June 11, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Re: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge your support of the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. At a very personal level, I know many people whose loved ones will profoundly benefit from having this resource in our community. I am writing not just on behalf of myself, but also many of my clients and their children.

There is a great need for We Are Up in our community due to the fact that it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the great need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations.

The two major groups that would most benefit from We Are Up include: adults under 65 with disabilities, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population, and seniors who make up 19.2% of the population. These rates are much higher than the national averages, which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively. Vulnerable populations often struggle to find appropriate housing in our community due to the lack of supportive housing for adults with disabilities, as well as a lack of day programs north of Arcata.

The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be available to the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. Having inclusive housing and care for those in need ensures our population is taken care of in the ways that they require, while also building a sense of community no matter their background, socioeconomic status, age, or disability.

Thank you!

Yours very truly,



Jason M. Garlick

Tim Hooven
3445 Central Ave
McKinleyville, CA 95519

Jun 10, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
Planning & Building Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Subject: Letter of Support for the "We Are Up" Community Project PLN-2024-19020

Dear Esteemed Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the "We Are Up" community project plan proposed for McKinleyville. As a resident of McKinleyville / concerned community member / McKinleyville Business Owner, I have followed the development of this project with great interest and believe it represents a significant and much-needed positive step forward for our community.

The "We Are Up" project, located on a beautiful 17-acre site in McKinleyville within walking distance to essential services, is a visionary initiative designed to empower adults on the autism spectrum and those with physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disabilities. It aims to create an innovative, integrated, multi-generational, and long-term community where people of diverse abilities, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds can live, learn, work, and thrive together.

I am particularly impressed by the project's comprehensive approach, which includes:

- **Inclusive Housing:** Plans for up to 70 mixed-income rental homes, providing much-needed housing for vulnerable populations, including adults, seniors, students, and healthcare professionals. This directly addresses the critical lack of available housing for adults with special needs in Humboldt County.
- **Vibrant Agricultural and Open Spaces:** Over 80% of the site will remain open land, dedicated to farming and ecological preservation. The inclusion of an apple orchard, a commercial greenhouse (which will serve as a place to learn basic and advanced job skills), livestock, and edible landscaping promotes health, skill development, and environmental education.
- **Community Hub:** A planned Community Center with an on-site commercial kitchen will facilitate community meals, enable the development of salable products, and offer vital employment and life skills training through classes like gardening, cooking, and farm-to-table meal preparation. It will also serve as a versatile event location for the broader community.

The "We Are Up" project represents a paradigm shift in how care is provided, fostering intergenerational support and true community integration rather than isolation. Its commitment to physical activity, social connection, and mental stimulation through various on-site programs and activities is truly commendable.

I believe that the successful implementation of the "We Are Up" project will bring numerous tangible benefits to McKinleyville, including:

- Providing secure and integrated housing for some of our most vulnerable neighbors.
- Creating meaningful employment and life skill development opportunities.
- Enhancing community cohesion by bringing diverse individuals together in a supportive environment.
- Preserving significant open spaces and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

I urge the Humboldt County Planning Commission to approve the "We Are Up" community project plan. Its approval will be a testament to your commitment to fostering innovative, inclusive, and thriving communities within Humboldt County.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this vital project.

Sincerely,

Tim Hooven

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Subject: Support for the We Are Up Community Project in McKinleyville

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to strongly encourage your support for the new We Are Up community project plan in McKinleyville. As a local business owner and active community member, I have seen firsthand the urgent need for affordable and accessible housing in our county. I believe that supporting this initiative is a meaningful step toward addressing that need and providing vital resources for our vulnerable populations.

Humboldt County faces significant challenges in housing accessibility, particularly for adults with disabilities and seniors. Currently, these groups comprise 13.2% and 19.2% of our population, respectively—rates that surpass national averages of 8.7% and 16.8%. Many of these residents struggle to find appropriate and supportive housing options.

Presently, there is a notable lack of supportive housing for adults with disabilities, and no day programs north of Arcata. The We Are Up Community Center, along with its commercial kitchen, will serve as a valuable resource for the community and a significant addition to McKinleyville. The thoughtfully designed open spaces and community-oriented features will enhance the quality of life for residents while fostering greater community engagement.

I respectfully urge you to support the current We Are Up project plan. Your backing can help bring this vital project to fruition and make a lasting difference in the lives of many in our community.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to our community's well-being.

Sincerely,

C. Jordan

Charlie Jordan
ED, Kevin Ebbert Foundation
Owner, Kinetic Koffee
Former Board Member and Chair, Humboldt Area Foundation
Business Advisor, SBDC

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support of the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

Thank you for you service to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kier Flicker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kier Flicker, BCBA

Kierflicker@gmail.com

Jolene Konnersman
10751 Oregon Avenue
Culver City, CA 90232

June 11, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Letter of Support for We Are Up Project PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the We Are Up community project in McKinleyville. I am an attorney and, since late 2021, I have been a Board Member and the Board Secretary of We Are Up.

We Are Up was established as a nonprofit in September 2021 with a strategic vision of developing a community where residents of all ages, abilities and incomes will support each other with the support of the wider community. The project will offer 70 units of affordable housing to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, seniors, and other community members. The site will also offer temporary housing for visiting or relocating medical professionals to help address chronic healthcare workforce shortages often attributed to the lack of housing in our rural community.

In addition to housing, We Are Up will offer community and a sense of belonging to those who live on site. There will be many opportunities for residents to connect to each other through gardening, job training, enrichment classes, and life skills. And with a commercial kitchen and modern event spaces, We Are Up will also be a gathering place for the larger community of Humboldt County for weddings, commercial kitchen use, and corporate events. By concentrating the development on a corner of the 17 acres, We Are Up will also preserve the vast majority of the land – over 80% – as open space for walking trails, contemplation, and outdoor education. Another environmental benefit of the project is the anticipated reduction of vehicle miles driven given the site's close proximity to grocery, pharmacy, health care, banking, bus line, and many other needs of daily life.

I support this project because of the tremendous need for supportive housing in Humboldt County, where almost none exists. I also support it because of the care and thoughtfulness with which We Are Up has approached the planning and layout of the community so as to minimize disruption to the existing neighborhood and the natural features of the land. It is this balance that makes the We Are Up project so unique – it simultaneously meets the undisputed need to provide housing and support for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations, while preserving open spaces and the status quo on the vast majority of the land.

I also support We Are Up's plan to build a commercial greenhouse, garden space, an orchard and shelters or pens for livestock. These features will have many community benefits, including promoting

farm-to-table food production, contributing to the economic development of the surrounding community, and providing employment opportunities for residents. It is also important to remember that the use of this land for these purposes is nothing new, but rather continues the historic agricultural uses of the site.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support the We Are Up project and urge you to accept it as proposed. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jolene Konnersman', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Jolene Konnersman
Board Member and Secretary
We Are Up

Jolene@WeAreUp.org

310-463-0393

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Claudia Lima. I am the mother of Christopher Lima age 28 who has Downs Syndrome. Christopher is also non-verbal. But if he could speak, he would have a lot to say about the benefits of this project!

Since his birth I have been a strong advocate for not only Christopher, but for also his peers.

I have served on the Area I Board and the State Council for Developmental Disabilities; I was the Area Manager for Humboldt County Special Olympics for 6 years and I currently serve on the Community Advisory Board for Cal Poly Humboldt Adaptive PE Master's Program. I am also a Board Member of We Are Up.

Based on all my experiences I know firsthand that there is a dire need for this project in this county. We have looked out of the area for housing for Christopher, but Humboldt County is his home. And McKinleyville, a welcoming community, is the perfect place for this project.

Christopher and most of his friends do not have Drivers Licenses, much less cars. The fact that public transportation is so close, is another plus to this project. Transportation is a huge issue for them. Many are unable to participate in Special Olympics, Unified sports programs at Cal Poly or other extracurricular activities. To have a place to go to with easy access to transportation will enhance their social lives immensely.

Our folks and their families need a safe place to gather, work and to celebrate without judgement. This is what our Community Center is all about.

Although our children have special needs, they have the same wants and desires as most everyone. They want relationships and a sense of purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Claudia Lima', written in dark ink.

Claudia Lima •535 Cedar Hill Lane •Arcata, CA
95521•claudiajlma@gmail.com

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in support of WE Are UP. There's a great need for a project like We Are Up not only for the folks with a disability and seniors, which make up over 32% of our population, which is higher than the national average.

Currently there is very little supportive housing for adults with disabilities

And No day care programs North of Arcata.

The commercial kitchen and meeting area will also be a great and needed asset for the community.

I appreciate your time and urge you to support this wonderful and needed project.

Sincerely,
John McBeth
Supporter

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support of the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need to We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups That would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs North of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Jackie McBeth
Supporter

Fatima Naylor and Chris Naylor

3801 H Street

Eureka, Ca. 95503

707-498-1724

Humboldt County Planning Commission

3015 H Street

Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations.

We have 2 children that are a part of these vulnerable populations. Caden is 19 years old and has been diagnosed with a genetic disorder called Fragile X Syndrome, as well as Autism and Epilepsy. His 17-year brother, Tate also has the same diagnoses. Caden and Tate are so much more than their disabilities. We make it our mission to make sure they have the most amazing lives and are happy. We also advocate for them to have the same opportunities as their peers do.

Although Caden and Tate are close in age, they are extremely different kids. Caden has blond hair with deep blue eyes and wears glasses. Tate has brown hair with big brown eyes and bushy eyebrows. Caden loves his classmates and kids in general. Tate loves adults and has a more difficult time with peers his own age. Caden loves to swim and watch basketball. We have season tickets with courtside seats to our local Cal Poly Humboldt Basketball games. Tate loves to go watch movies and see local plays as well as the symphony. Tate also loves to go to church and attends St. Mary's mass weekly.

My husband and I recognize our family is not like everyone else's. Typically, when you have children that are 17 years of age or older, there is a level of independence that occurs, such as having their driver's license. When we go out, we still have to get sitters to stay with the boys, as they are unable to care for themselves independently. We also aren't a family that goes out to dinner together much; we are more of a get take-out and go back to our house to relax and eat. Home is our favorite place to be together and the place where our boys are the most comfortable. We know what works for our boys and sometimes that means we are dividing and conquering without the other. I will take Tate to the Eureka Symphony and my husband will take Caden roller skating at the municipal auditorium, or vice versa. We love taking trips together, we just don't go too far from home. We rent beautiful homes on the ocean, or a house during the summer with a big pool and hot tub. We still make memories as a family and the kids feel safe and secure. Routines are important, and changes to plans can pose extremely difficult, so the more we know ahead of time and can explain to the kids, the more comfortable and enjoyable the experience can be for them, and for us.

We have learned that there is no clear road map on this journey. All we know is to love and advocate for our beautiful boys. We don't need a white picket fence as long as we have each other. We Are Up will ensure that our children/adults remain a part of our local community. They will be able to participate in all the events they know and love and continue to live in a beautiful environment in Humboldt County.

Sincerely,

Fatima Naylor and Chris Naylor



Redwood Coast Regional Center

Respecting Choice in the Redwood Community

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the specialized residential and community building opportunities for disabled adults in Northern Humboldt County. The need for specialized residential opportunities that are inclusive, and community based are clear. Every year, Redwood Coast Regional Center surveys our clients, families, and stakeholders and the number one unmet need is *always affordable housing*. Lack of secure housing for our most vulnerable residents affects all other measures and is the foundation for success and avoiding institutional settings.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day or employment services north of Arcata. People with disabilities are priced out of the housing market in McKinleyville, even though it is the town where they grew up, have family, community contacts and social networks. I am fully in support of community developments which increase access to the needed support and that help people with disabilities remain in their home communities and am excited to answer any questions the Planning Commission might have regarding the needs of our local residents with disabilities.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Heather Odle

Director of Community Services

(707) 445-0893 x 334

□ 525 2nd Street, Ste 300, Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 445-0893
□ 270 Chestnut St., Ste A, Ft Bragg, CA 95437 (707) 964-6387
□ 180 3rd Street, Lakeport, CA 95453 (707) 262-0470

□ 1116 Airport Park Blvd., Ukiah, CA 95482 (707) 462-3832
□ 1301 Northcrest Dr., Crescent City, CA 95531 (707) 464-7488
□ 14888 Olympic Dr., Clearlake, CA 95422 (707) 621-6169

Stephanie & Scott Phelps
710 Hilma Dr
Eureka, CA 95503

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

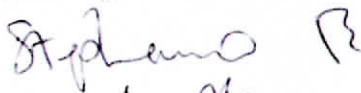
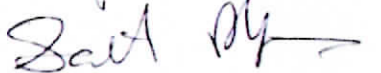
Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. We appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property. We couldn't imagine a better supportive team of community members involved in this project to see it through and help it come to fruition. Please consider your own family and friends that would benefit from the support of this much needed project.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA

P.O. Box 428
Blue Lake, CA 95525

Office: (707) 668-5101
Fax: (707) 668-4272

www.bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov



June 6th, 2025

Iver Skavdal, Chair
Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Chair Skavdal and Commissioners,

I am writing in support of We Are Up's re-designed project plan for their previously approved development project in McKinleyville (PLN-2024-19020). This updated project plan, which includes multi-use community space and a commercial kitchen, aligns with Blue Lake Rancheria's ongoing focus on community resiliency and food access.

Blue Lake Rancheria has been supportive of We Are Up's critical initiatives since its inception and is proud of its years long effort to bring accessible housing and assistance to vulnerable populations in Humboldt County. As you know, elders and community members with disabilities represent a significant percentage of Humboldt County residents and are often the populations most likely to experience housing insecurity.

Our Tribe has seen firsthand how important housing is both for our members and for local residents. We Are Up's project offers a critical solution to the region's continuing housing accessibility crisis and these newly designed features will only enhance the benefits of this project.

I appreciate your consideration of this project. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please call my staff, Ciara Emery, at (707) 713-9696.

Sincerely,



Jason Ramos
Chairman
Blue Lake Rancheria

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in the community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

I would also like to add that this is not only a problem in Humboldt County, but is clearly a blight that faces many communities across the United states. I see We Are Up as serving as a model community for all areas in need of providing a responsible community that serves ALL of the community members. Thank you for your consideration of approving this well thought out propsal.

Sincerely,

Peg Smith
co-founder Cowgirl Creamery

June 11, 2025

☐ **Administration, Finance,
and Human Resources**

1275 8th Street
Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 826-8633

☐ **Billing**

1385 8th Street
Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 826-8642

• **Arcata
Community Health Center**

1150 Foster Avenue
Arcata, CA 95521

• **Burre Dental Center /
Mobile Dental Services**

959 Myrtle Avenue
Eureka, CA 95501

• **Del Norte
Community Health Center**

550 East Washington Boulevard
Crescent City, CA 95531

• **Eureka
Community Health Center**

2200 Tydd Street
Eureka, CA 95501

• **Ferndale
Community Health Center**

638 Main Street (PO Box 1157)
Ferndale, CA 95536

• **Fortuna
Community Health Center**

3750 Rohnerville Road
Fortuna, CA 95540

• **McKinleyville
Community Health Center**

1644 Central Avenue
McKinleyville, CA 95519

• **Mobile Health Services /
Telehealth & Visiting
Specialists Center**

2426 Buhne Street
Eureka, CA 95501

• **NorthCountry
Prenatal Services**

3800 Janes Road, Suite 101
Arcata, CA 95521

• **Open Door
Gynecology Services**

3770 Janes Road
Arcata, CA 95521

• **Redwood
Community Health Center**

2350 Buhne Street
Eureka, CA 95501

• **Willow Creek
Community Health Center**

38883 Highway 299
Willow Creek, CA 95573

• **Member Services**

• **Del Norte**
550 East Washington
Boulevard
Crescent City, CA 95531

• **Humboldt**
1522 3rd Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear County Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. As the largest provider of primary care, behavioral health, and pregnancy services in our community, we see firsthand the critical need for **safe, affordable housing**. Housing is the foundation of both individual well-being and a healthy community. Without stable housing, people will continue to struggle with maintaining their **physical and psychological health**.

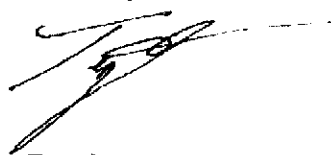
This initiative is vital for addressing the **shortage of accessible housing** and the need for inclusive spaces that serve Humboldt County's most vulnerable residents. The populations most at risk include individuals with **physical or developmental disabilities** and seniors, who are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of **loneliness and isolation**. Currently, adults under 65 with disabilities make up **13.2%** of Humboldt County's population, while seniors comprise **19.2%**—both above the national averages of **8.7%** and **16.8%**, respectively. Many of these individuals face significant challenges in securing appropriate housing and services, making the We Are Up project an essential addition to our community.

Beyond providing housing, the **intergenerational design** of this project fosters a strong sense of inclusion by integrating seniors into the community. Additionally, the **Community Center and commercial kitchen** will serve as valuable spaces for local residents, enriching McKinleyville with much-needed resources and gathering places.

The thoughtful design of the project, including the **preservation of open space**, sets a powerful example of how we can develop sustainable communities that enhance well-being and connection.

Thank you for your service to the community and for considering this important project.

Sincerely,



Tory Starr
Chief Executive Officer
Open Door Community Health Centers

Linda Sundberg
1150 Vista Drive
McKinleyville, CA 95519
707 498 6441
linda@grsinc.biz

June 9, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

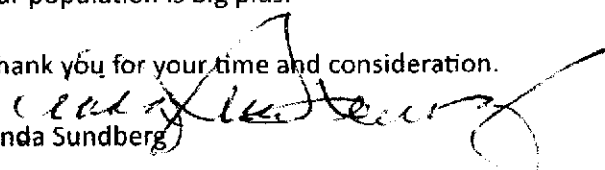
I am writing with my full encouragement and support for your backing of the new We Are Up community project plan that is situated in McKinleyville, CA. There is such a need for this project in particular, for our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. My family are lifetime residents of McKinleyville, back to my great grandparents migrating from Europe. I have personally witnessed the groups of folks right here in our own town that this project would/could serve. This includes adults under the age of 65 with a disability, this group makes up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These numbers are higher than the national average.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. I can personally attest to this need. With a background in the insurance industry, I was able to assist with insurance coverage for a limited number of housing projects for the disabled population. The homes housed a small number of tenants and they were isolated without a lot of interactive activity on site.

The fact that this is a live work project and provides the stimulation that this group needs and is entitled to makes it attractive in so many ways. In addition, we have personal relationships with close friends of adult children with disabilities, that need the comfort in their lives to know their adult children will have an opportunity for a wonderful life of their own.

The community center and commercial kitchen is a big plus for the all. McKinleyville is a very desirable place to live. Any facilities that promote a gathering place for our population is big plus.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Linda Sundberg



June 5, 2025

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support of the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is not enough supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

The thoughtful planning that has gone into the project assures that this property is being designed not just as a beautiful facility, but one that goes above and beyond to assure residents have a chance to be connected and engaged with the community around them. It's an investment in people and in our community. As an economic development agency, we celebrate that.

Thank you for you service to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ross Welch'.

Ross Welch
Executive Director



North Edge: Business Financing & Community Development

northedgefinancing.org

707 K St. Eureka, CA 95501

(707) 798-6132

Trillium Realty Group

DRE# 02202719

Humboldt County Planning Commission

3015 H Street

Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am a long-term McKinleyville resident and small business owner. I am fully in support of the We Are UP community project. I've seen first-hand the great need in our community for accessible housing for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. In volunteering with the We Are Up project; I've met so many families who are out of options for housing for their family members with disabilities. This is a beautiful project that not only will help those who need it most but will be a wonderful inclusive addition to our community.

There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages, which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

I'm urging you to support the We Are Up community project. Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Hannah Winans

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. We appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

We support and believe in this project wholeheartedly; and we are generous donors. We see this project as a legacy for future generations and as a model to other communities for how to take care of our most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,
Robin Wolff, LCSW
Len Wolff, MFT

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

The vision that the We Are Up Board has presented allows families of people with special needs the peace of mind to know that their family members are not only being well taken care of, but that they can thrive in our wonderful small town community. We are proud to support We Are Up.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Robert McLaughlin



BETTENDORF ENTERPRISES, INC.
ARCATA DIVISION

P.O. Box 4689
Arcata, CA 95518-4689
(707) 822-8271
Fax (707) 822-0522

Humboldt County Planning Commission
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: PLN-2024-19020

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to support the new We Are Up community project plan for McKinleyville. There's a great need for We Are Up in our community because it addresses the lack of accessible housing and the need for community for some of Humboldt County's most vulnerable populations. The groups that would benefit from We Are Up include adults under 65 with a disability, who make up 13.2% of Humboldt County's population and seniors who make up 19.2% of our population. These rates are higher than the national averages which are 8.7% and 16.8% respectively and currently struggle to find appropriate housing.

Currently there is little supportive housing for adults with disabilities and there are no day programs north of Arcata. The Community Center and commercial kitchen will be used by the community and be a wonderful addition to McKinleyville. I appreciate the new design and the open space that will remain on the property.

We are personally affected by the lack of housing options for this vulnerable community as our best friends have two children with special needs who are the verge of adulthood. Because of them, we have met so many other wonderful people who are also a part of this community and currently most of them plan on taking care of their kids and grandkids on their own. But what happens as both the parents and their kids age? Who will they depend on to take care of their "kids" when they can no longer do it? We Are Up is essential for these families so they know that their family members will be taken care of after they can no longer do it. The vision that We Arc Up has is absolutely beautiful as it will integrate housing, jobs and community. I cannot think of a cause that I am more proud to be a part of.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Michael and Heidi McLaughlin

CORPORATE ADDRESS: 4545 West End Rd - P.O. Box 4689 - Arcata, CA 95518-4689
Office (707) 822-8271 Fax (707) 822-0522
<http://bettendorfftrucking.com>