



FW: TOT Funding Comment – Willow Creek Chamber

From Damico, Tracy <TDamico@co.humboldt.ca.us>

Date Tue 4/22/2025 8:40 AM

To Maffei, Kaleigh <kmaffei@co.humboldt.ca.us>

Kaleigh –
Please print for the file.
Thanks
Tracy

From: Zena Bardelas <zenabardelas@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 7:56 PM

To: Bohn, Rex <RBohn@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Bushnell, Michelle <mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Wilson, Mike <Mike.Wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Arroyo, Natalie <narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us>; Madrone, Steve <smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us>

Cc: Damico, Tracy <TDamico@co.humboldt.ca.us>

Subject: TOT Funding Comment – Willow Creek Chamber

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Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

My name is Zena Bardelas, and I'm writing on behalf of the Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce. I had planned to attend Tuesday's meeting to share the following public comment in person, but due to the revised schedule, I am unable to stay for the later portion of the agenda.

Please accept this message as my public comment for the record:

Public Comment – TOT Funding (Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce)

Thank you for continuing to support Humboldt's rural Gateway communities through the TOT program—it makes a real difference.

The Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce relies on a very small part-time team and a passionate group of community volunteers to carry out our work. From organizing local events to promoting tourism and supporting small businesses, our efforts help strengthen the local economy and create a more welcoming experience for visitors.

But the Chamber is more than just a marketing organization. In a town where resources are few and services are limited, we are one of the last remaining volunteer-driven organizations working directly in and for the Willow Creek community. This makes your support through the TOT program not just helpful—it's essential. These funds allow us to continue providing the kinds of services and community engagement that would otherwise disappear.

We also encourage the Board to consider recalculating TOT allocations using current contribution data, and to revisit those figures regularly. Doing so would support a fairer and more responsive funding structure while

encouraging all Gateway communities to continue growing tourism in sustainable and creative ways.

We're grateful for the proposed increase to the funding cap for FY 2025–2026. While it's not guaranteed, it represents a hopeful step forward—and we are ready to put those dollars to work for Willow Creek.

Thank you again for your time and continued support.

With appreciation,
Zena Bardelas

Community Programs and Engagement Director
Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce

zenabardelas@email.com

707-498-1009



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April 18, 2025

Open Letter of Support for Continued Funding of the Arcata Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center Activities

To the Honorable Humboldt County Board of Supervisors,

I write today to express my strong support for the continued allocation of county gateway visitor center funds to the Arcata Chamber of Commerce, which has long served as a de facto visitor center and essential economic driver for the region.

Arcata is not only a jewel of Humboldt County but a vital gateway to its broader tourism economy. Just as California is a major engine of tourism for the United States, Arcata plays a similarly pivotal role for our county. It is a community rich in culture, events, natural beauty, and entrepreneurial energy—an anchor for travelers and a springboard for exploration throughout Humboldt.

Arcata plays host to some of the county's most iconic and beloved tourism events, including the Kinetic Sculpture Race, North Country Fair, All Species Parade, Godwit Days, and the renowned Oyster Festival. These events are not just local celebrations—they are regional economic catalysts. The planning, coordination, and execution of such events demand significant time, labor, and resources, much of which is carried by the Arcata Chamber of Commerce. Disinvesting now would risk setting off a harmful cycle of diminished tourism and economic output—a negative feedback loop that would be difficult and costly to reverse.

Can we truly imagine a Humboldt County without the Oyster Festival or the Kinetic Sculpture Race? These events—and the thousands of visitors they attract—generate tourism dollars that ripple throughout the entire county. Lodging, dining, local shops, and service providers all benefit, directly and indirectly, from the vibrancy that Arcata brings.

With recent reports indicating a sharp decline of nearly 900,000 fewer Canadian tourists crossing the border, now is not the time to withdraw support from one of our strongest tourism assets. On the contrary, strategic investment in proven institutions like the Arcata Chamber of Commerce is essential. It is a well-

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NORTHCOASTSBDC.ORG

ADMIN@NORTHCOASTSBDC.ORG

HUMBOLDT & DEL NORTE COUNTIES: (707) 445-9720, 876 7TH STREET, ARCATA CA, 95521



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established business principle that building upon an existing enterprise is far more cost-effective and impactful than attempting to create a new one from scratch.

The Arcata Chamber is already in place, performing this vital work. To tie one hand behind our county's back by removing funding from Arcata's visitor services would be to diminish our collective ability to compete in the tourism economy. The Chamber has demonstrated its capacity, its commitment, and its deep-rooted connection to the community. The infrastructure is there. The leadership is there. The track record is there.

The time is now to reinforce our commitment to Humboldt County's tourism economy and to the institutions that power it. I urge the Board to continue funding the Arcata Chamber of Commerce with gateway visitor center resources. The return on this investment is tangible, measurable, and essential to the future prosperity of our county.

Sincerely,

Wil Franklin

Director, North Coast Small Business Development Center

Serving Humboldt, Del Norte, and Adjacent Tribal Lands

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