



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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The Honorable Rob Bonta
Attorney General
State of California
Department of Justice
1300 I Street
Sacramento, CA
October 17, 2023

Dear Honorable Attorney General Rob Bonta,

I am writing on behalf of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, to bring attention to the pressing issue of rising fuel costs in rural Northern California. The economic hardships we are facing due to these escalating prices are putting an immense burden on our residents and businesses, and are in dire need of relief.

As you are undoubtedly aware, rural California counties like ours often face higher gas prices than much of the state. Due to the county's isolated location, residents often grapple with deeper financial hardships simply for where they live. Because of this, our county is heavily reliant on automobiles for transportation, both for personal and business purposes; whether it is commuting to work, running errands, or transporting goods and services, affordable access to fuel is essential for the daily life and economic sustainability of our community. Transit and rail are not options for our rural residents. Unfortunately, the recent surge in fuel prices has created an untenable situation for many Humboldt County residents.

The consequences of these skyrocketing fuel costs are far-reaching and have exacerbated existing economic challenges in our region:

1. **Financial Strain:** Many residents are struggling to make ends meet, as a significant portion of their income is now allocated to fuel expenses. This financial strain has ripple effects on household budgets, causing sacrifices in other essential areas such as food, healthcare, and education.
2. **Impact on Local Businesses:** Small businesses, which are the backbone of our community, are feeling the pinch as they grapple with increased transportation costs. This, in turn, threatens local employment opportunities and hampers economic growth.
3. **Agricultural Challenges:** Our region is known for its agriculture, and farmers are grappling with the increased cost of fuel for equipment and transportation of product. This directly affects product availability and affordability.
4. **Reduced Mobility:** Rising fuel costs lead to reduced mobility, making it difficult for people to access essential services, employment opportunities, and medical facilities.

Given these challenges, I respectfully request that your agency consider implementing measures to provide fuel cost relief for rural California counties such as Humboldt. Possible solutions could include:

1. Price Stabilization Programs: Exploring options for price stabilization programs that can shield rural communities from the worst effects of fuel price volatility.
2. Advocacy for Rural Needs: Advocating for policies and initiatives at the state and federal levels that consider the unique challenges faced by rural areas in terms of transportation and fuel costs.

I understand that this is a complex issue, but I believe that with your support, we can work towards a solution that eases the economic hardships currently burdening our community. We look to your actions to alleviate the financial strain caused by rising fuel costs in our rural county.

Sincerely,

Steve Madrone, Chair
County of Humboldt
Board of Supervisors