



Grassroots Institute

Progressive Solutions for the Common Good

Growing the Commons, Spring 2021

May 10, 2021

Dear Supervisors,

The Grassroots Institute (GRI) is a local civic organization composed of your constituents, your friends, and your neighbors. We come together, to promote the common good of all Mendocino residents.

Mendocino's future is threatened by epic wildfires, droughts and power outages, directly linked to climate change. It's critical our county fully engage in a common effort to honestly confront climate change with efficient, effective, and comprehensive action.

As residents, we're working to educate ourselves and to push for change at all levels of government that will reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and advance the well being of the county now, and into the future. As part of that effort, we are submitting a "do-able" three pronged strategy for action to reduce county government's dependence on fossil fuel, provide and promote the use of clean solar electricity for tourists and residents using electric vehicles, and modernize the Mendocino Transit Authority's fleet with clean electric buses.

In the upcoming budget, we request the Board set aside \$2 million of the county's almost \$17 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to implement the following initiatives:

- Installation of Photovoltaic (PV) Panels on Public Buildings - Photovoltaic systems have a proven track record providing reliable clean electricity. Once installed, PV systems substantially lower the need to purchase electricity from commercial suppliers, and often provide new revenues through the sale of excess electricity. Installing PV systems is consistent with Federal, State & Local Government energy conservation and climate change mitigation objectives. Installation is a one time capital improvement, which enhances the County's long term fiscal security and sustainability.
- Install Additional Electric Car Charging Stations - The health of Mendocino County's economy is strongly linked to tourism. Electric car owners are a growing segment of consumers traveling to county destinations. The County's ability to attract tourists using electric vehicles will be significantly increased by ensuring easy convenient access to up to date "fast" electric vehicle charging stations. Further, electric vehicles are favored by a growing number of county residents as a clean alternative to fossil fuel. The Grassroots Institute also recommends combining installation of public PV systems with installation of electric vehicle charging stations and Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) electronic device charging stations wherever possible as a way to further capture multiple public benefits.
- Transition Public Transportation to Electric Vehicles - The Grassroots Institute urges the County to collaborate with the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) to convert as much as possible to electric vehicles. Converting the public transit system fleet provides an excellent one time capital investment consistent with the grant nature of American Rescue Plan Act funding. The Grassroots Institute further urges the County and MTA explore how smaller more efficient electric vehicles might be used to expand services routes at the same or reduced cost.

As your constituents, we stand ready to work with your Board and county staff to further the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Sincerely,
GRI