MENDOCINO Co., 6/1/21 — Grassroots solutions to climate change — a letter to the Fort Bragg City Council and Mendocino County Board of Supervisors from the Spring 2021 Growing the Commons workshops and Grassroots Institute:

The following is a letter to the editor, published here as opinion. The opinions expressed in this letter are those of the writer. If you would like to submit a letter to the editor feel free to write to info@mendovoice.com.
Climate action in their FY 21-22 budget. Here are a few challenges and opportunities GRI found in its climate research:

County's precedent that established climate change mitigation as a major component of governance; allocating approximately $12 million for that mitigate climate change and position our communities for an environmentally sustainable future. GRI recommends following Sonoma both Fort Bragg and Mendocino County are holding budget hearings to determine the fiscal priorities for their jurisdictions. GRI is asking governments to act on the climate challenges confronting our communities. A broad-based coalition of civic groups and concerned residents most effectively apply the millions of dollars coming to city, county and other local government agencies from the American Rescue Plan Act.

The Spring 2021 Growing the Commons workshops are providing assistance and recommendations to our public officials on how we should most effectively apply the millions of dollars coming to city, county and other local government agencies from the American Rescue Plan Act.

GRI’s Climate Crisis Working Group, in collaboration with experts and city and county officials, has developed a three-prong strategy for local governments to act on the climate challenges confronting our communities. A broad-based coalition of civic groups and concerned residents have joined the effort asking the City of Fort Bragg and the County of Mendocino to take the too-long delayed step of institutionalizing a funding component in their budgets for climate action. Initially, we ask that, at a minimum, Fort Bragg and Mendocino County invest a modest 10% of their federal American Rescue Plan Act allocation to invest in Photo-Voltaic (PV) Systems on public buildings, to expand “fast” charging stations for electric vehicles and to modernize the Mendocino Transit Authority’s (MTA) fleet with electric buses.

By July First, city and county governments must adopt their Fiscal Year (FY) 21-22 operating bud gets. As part of the budget adoption process, both Fort Bragg and Mendocino County are holding budget hearings to determine the fiscal priorities for their jurisdictions. GRI is asking community groups and individuals to actively participate in the budget process to help establish climate action programs in their budgets that mitigate climate change and position our communities for an environmentally sustainable future. GRI recommends following Sonoma County’s precedent that established climate change mitigation as a major component of governance; allocating approximately $12 million for climate action in their FY 21-22 budget. Here are a few challenges and opportunities GRI found in its climate research:

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• The scientific consensus is clear; climate change resulting from pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have a devastating impact on our health, well-being, and economy. We are beset with wild fires, drought and power outages directly resulting from climate change. We need smart, strategic policies from local government to safeguard our collective future.

• The biggest factor in greenhouse emissions in the North Coast comes from fossil-fuel vehicles. Electric Vehicles (EV) are a partial solution to this problem and make up a large market share of autos on our roadways. EV sales are growing by more than 10% per year. For Mendocino County to successfully compete for tourism, fast charging stations must be easily and conveniently accessible throughout the county.

• PV systems have become cost effective electricity generators. When coupled with battery storage, they reduce dependence on costly grid sources, provide a source of local electricity during grid shutdowns and reduce greenhouse emissions. Installing PV systems with these one-time funds will provide ongoing savings for City and County taxpayers as local government energy bills decrease.

Both the State and Federal governments have set greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of at least 30% or more by 2030 and are shifting funding to accomplish those goals. Mendocino can successfully compete for these funds, but only if it makes a commitment to institutionalize climate action in local government.

Go to www.grassroots-institute.org and click on the Climate Crisis Action Page to see how you can support this effort to solarize local government, add EV charging stations county wide, and help MTA go solar electric.

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