

Democratic Central Committee of Mendocino County calls for a Prohibition on New Gas Stations

WHEREAS, Abrupt anthropogenic climate change is a real and increasingly urgent threat to public health and safety that demands action at every level of government, and the County of Mendocino has a well-established record that justifies taking local action in order to do its part in helping to address the global climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 Mendocino County adopted a Climate Emergency Declaration, and new gasoline stations are not consistent with this policy, which calls for a “just transition away from fossil fuels”; and

WHEREAS, on December 19, 2023, Mendocino County adopted a second Climate Emergency Declaration reinforcing the earlier Declaration and providing new administrative powers to implement climate actions; and

WHEREAS, On September 23, 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-79-20](#) setting 2035 as the year by which all new vehicles sold in California must be zero-emission; and

WHEREAS, On September 12, 2018, Governor Brown issued, and Governor Newsom has since affirmed, [Executive Order B-55-18](#), calling for the State to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 and subsequently called for full economic decarbonization no later than 2045. This very ambitious goal means that local governments must take action immediately to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and avoid prolonging dependency on fossil fuel infrastructure into the future, for example by permitting new gasoline stations; and

WHEREAS, In January 2018, Governor Brown issued [Executive Order B-48-18](#) calling for five million zero-emission vehicles by 2030 and the installation of 250,000 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the State; and

WHEREAS, Consequences of anthropogenic climate disruption have already severely impacted the lives, health, and livelihoods of nearly every family and business in Mendocino County, driven by a devastating increase in drought, wildfire, flooding, evacuations, electric power-shutoff episodes, extreme heat events, and other anomalous disruptions; and

WHEREAS, Climatic disruptions are increasing globally with 2023 ending as the hottest year ever recorded for global average temperature; and

WHEREAS, Transportation accounts for a significant % of GHG emissions in Mendocino County with the burning of gasoline and diesel fuel for transportation as the leading cause of GHG emissions in this sector; and

WHEREAS, Gasoline stations pose significant local impacts on public health and the environment. This includes toxic/carcinogenic air contamination, surface water runoff, leaking underground storage tanks, and more; and

WHEREAS, New gasoline stations frequently add to local traffic congestion and safety issues; and

WHEREAS, Fossil fuel use imposes deep and long-standing racial injustice. In every drop that comes out of a gasoline dispenser, there is a trail of devastation for communities of color and the environment around the world that leads all the way back to the point of extraction of the crude oil from the ground in places like Nigeria, Ecuador, and Kern County California. Low income communities of color in the US and around the world, “frontline communities” are poisoned and/or displaced by effluent and emissions from these operations; low income communities along rail and roadways are threatened by the hazard of oil and gas transportation; similar historically disadvantaged communities of color near refineries and gas processing facilities, “fenceline communities,” face respiratory disorders, cancer, and death rates much higher than the national average. Indigenous communities around the world are severely impacted by pumping and pipelines; and

WHEREAS, Currently there are over 1 million electric vehicles (EVs) in California and an increasing number on the roads in Mendocino County. With the rapid rise of practical and affordable EVs, and many new models becoming available on a regular basis, the need for charging infrastructure will inevitably grow as the need for gasoline stations diminishes. Mendocino County should encourage and support private sector investments based on clear trends that indicate that any new gasoline or diesel capacity added in the 2020s is likely to be abandoned as unprofitable in a few short years; and

WHEREAS, New gasoline stations have been and are continuing to be proposed in Mendocino County; and

WHEREAS, Outdated 20th century permitting rules continue to enable new gasoline stations to be permitted despite countervailing state and Mendocino County climate policy and energetic community opposition; and

WHEREAS, there is an abundance of gasoline stations in Mendocino County with no demonstrated need for any new gasoline stations in Mendocino County; and

WHEREAS, limited Mendocino County staff time, money and resources are wasted processing new gas station applications and potentially responding to public opposition to them; and

WHEREAS, limited Mendocino County resources should be used instead to develop clean-emission, affordable, accessible, convenient public transportation networks; safe, connected, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure; and clean vehicle charging/fueling infrastructure;

THEREFORE, Be It RESOLVED, that the Mendocino County Democratic Party Central Committee urges Mendocino County to adopt an ordinance that amends the County’s Zoning Ordinance in order to prohibit the construction of new gas stations in all Zoning Districts. Mendocino County should no longer accept for processing or permitting any applications for new gasoline service stations nor the expansion of existing gasoline service station infrastructure. Existing gas stations would be permitted to continue operations as a legal, non-conforming use.

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Sponsored By: Mendocino County Democratic Party

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