

May 5, 2020
Regular Meeting

Item # 5a

(Consent Agenda)

County Counsel/CDD

Additional Documents:

**Comment Ltr. on Dept. of Water
Resources Approval of Indian Wells
Valley Groundwater Sustainability**

Shannon Kendall

From: Lynn Boulton <amazinglynn@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2020 9:30 AM
To: Shannon Kendall
Subject: Item 5A

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mono County Supervisors,
Thank you for preparing this excellent letter. The Range of Light Group fully supports the Board in approving and sending it.
Cheers,
Lynn Boulton
Chair Range of Light Group
Toiyabe Chapter

May 5, 2020
Regular Meeting

Item # 7c
(Regular Agenda)

Finance

Additional Documents:

**Power Point: 2018-2019 Audit
Results of Mono County-Wide
Annual Audit**

FY 2018-19 Audit Results of Mono County-Wide Annual Audit

*May 5, 2020 presentation to the Mono County Board
of Supervisors*

SUMMARY	OBJECTIVES	SCOPE	RESULTS
Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)	Financial - Fairly stated with GASB standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All transactions and balances • Processes / Internal Controls • Reporting and disclosures 	Unmodified opinion No Findings
Single Audit Report	Compliance – followed federal grant rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Programs • Processes / Internal Controls • Reporting and disclosures 	Unmodified opinion Two Findings

 🔍

Auditor - Controller

- Audits

FY 2018-2019 Audits

FY 2017-2018 Audits

2018-2019 Audits

📄 2018-19 Mono County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (3 MB)

📄 2018-19 Mono County Single Audit (681 KB)

Reports available on Auditor-Controller Website

<https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/auditor/page/2018-2019-audits-0>

CAFR Structure and Contents

see Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTORY SECTION: transmittal letter, organization chart

2. FINANCIAL SECTION – Scope of financial audit

- a. Report of independent auditor
- b. Management's Discussion & Analysis
- c. Government-wide financial statements
- d. Fund financial statements
- e. Footnotes
- f. Required supplementary information
- g. Detailed fund statements and schedules

3. STATISTICAL SECTION

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT *pages 1 -3*

- Price Paige & Company
- Management Responsibility
 - Prepare financial statements (GASB)
 - Disclosures
 - Internal control over transactions & balances
- Auditor Responsibility
 - Express opinion on fair presentation with reasonable assurance not material misstated
 - Consider internal control structure & operation



The Place to Be

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Supervisors
County of Mono
Bridgeport, California

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the County of Mono, California (the "County"), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2019, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the County's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the County's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

570 N. Magnolia Avenue, Suite 100
Clovis, CA 93611
tel 559.299.9540
fax 559.299.2344

Audit Results

Opinions

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the County of Mono, California as of June 30, 2019, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

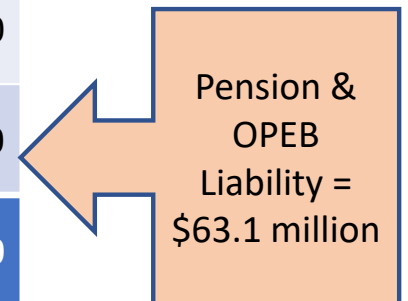
Key Financial Discussion Points for FY 2018-19

- Management's Discussion & Analysis (pgs 5-18)
 - Objective analysis of financial activities
 - Condensed comparable information
 - Net Position
 - Changes in Net Position
 - Fund Balance
 - Capital Assets
 - Long-term Debt
 - Pension and Retiree Health

Net Position at FYE – *page 8*

- Assets less Liabilities to evaluate financial condition
 - Assets – resources to provide future services
 - Liabilities – obligations to turn over resources
 - Net Position – left over resources for future years

	FY 2019	FY 2018	Change
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS, NET OF DEBT	\$40,036,000	\$41,410,000	\$(1,374,000)
RESTRICTED BY EXTERNAL PARTIES	26,873,000	24,602,000	2,271,000
UNRESTRICTED	(43,516,000)	(45,087,000)	1,571,000
TOTAL NET POSTION	\$23,393,000	\$20,925,000	\$2,468,000



Pension & OPEB Liability = \$63.1 million

Change in Net Position – *page 10*

- Results of operations (Revenues less Expenses)

	FY 2019	FY 2018	Change
Program revenues	\$30,389,000	\$30,540,000	\$(151,000)
Taxes and interest revenues	26,555,000	26,037,000	518,000
Expenses	(54,084,00)	(51,721,000)	(2,363,000)
Interest expense	(821,000)	(57,000)	(764,000)
Net business-type activities	429,000	579,000	(150,000)
Net increase in position	\$2,468,000	\$5,378,000	\$(2,910,000)

Fund Balance – page 12 and footnote 9

- Governmental funds – fund balance
 - Near-term inflows, outflows
 - Spendable resources for future budget cycles

	Net Change in Fund Balance Governmental Funds			
	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Fund balance, beginning of year	\$ 38,235,330	\$ 35,248,092	\$ 2,987,238	8.47%
Revenues	57,175,019	55,515,378	1,659,641	2.99%
Expenditures	(59,771,893)	(52,257,838)	(7,514,055)	14.38%
Other financing sources and uses	21,960,751	(270,302)	22,231,053	-8224.52%
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$ 57,599,207</u>	<u>\$ 38,235,330</u>	<u>\$ 19,363,877</u>	<u>50.64%</u>
Unrestricted fund balance	<u>\$ 12,265,600</u>	<u>\$ 12,127,097</u>	<u>\$ 138,503</u>	<u>1.14%</u>
% of fund balance which is unrestricted	21.29%	31.72%		

Capital Assets – page 15 and footnote 4

- Used in operations to provide services

Capital Assets (Net of Depreciation)

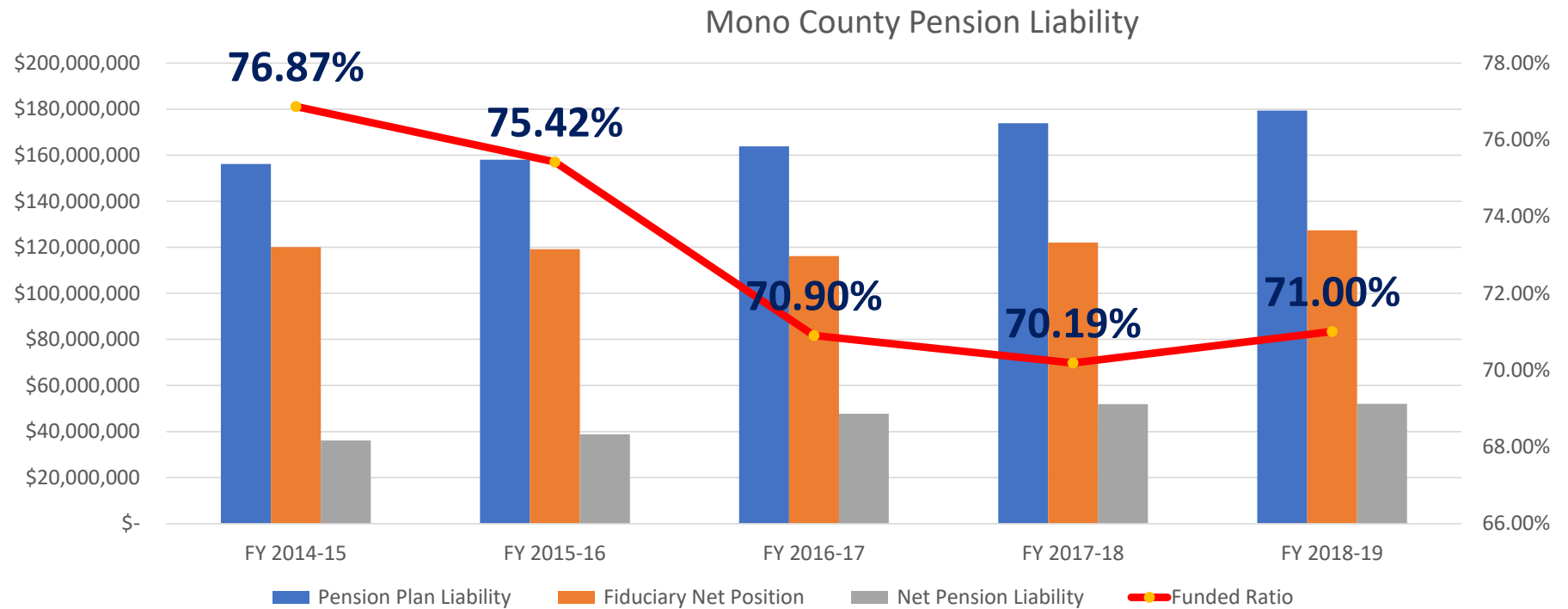
	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities		Total	
	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
Land	\$ 6,793,617	\$ 6,793,617	\$ 328,423	\$ 328,423	\$ 7,122,040	\$ 7,122,040
Construction in progress	5,375,895	1,895,624	61,000	–	5,436,895	1,895,624
Infrastructure	95,850,756	94,921,931	463,141	463,141	96,313,897	95,385,072
Structures & improvements	19,819,380	19,023,057	7,812,944	7,812,944	27,632,324	26,836,001
Equipment	20,164,074	18,742,832	1,532,463	1,532,463	21,696,537	20,275,295
Intangibles	1,524,560	1,148,577	–	–	1,524,560	1,148,577
Accumulated Depreciation	(109,476,327)	(107,434,116)	(4,173,316)	(3,817,930)	(113,649,643)	(111,252,046)
Total	\$ 40,051,955	\$ 35,091,522	\$ 6,024,655	\$ 6,319,041	\$ 46,076,610	\$ 41,410,563

Long-term Debt – *page 16 and footnote 5*

- Two types
 - Debt – bonds, notes payable, certificates of participation
 - Expenditure accrual – compensated absences, pension, OPEB

	Long Term Liabilities					
	Governmental Activities		Business-Type Activities		Total	
	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
Pension obligation bonds	\$ 580,300	\$ 696,600	\$ –	\$ –	\$ 580,300	\$ 696,600
Certificates of Participation	19,940,000	–	–	–	19,940,000	–
Unamortized premium	2,228,348	–	–	–	2,228,348	–
Notes payable	159,697	271,026	–	–	159,697	271,026
Compensated absences	3,150,222	2,941,849	65,859	53,869	3,216,081	2,995,718
Net pension liability	51,106,087	50,886,605	907,872	957,935	52,013,959	51,844,540
Net OPEB liability	11,065,262	16,902,308	–	–	11,065,262	16,902,308
Claims liability	3,241,855	3,164,755	–	–	3,241,855	3,164,755
Refunded certificates of participation	–	–	1,700,700	1,945,900	1,700,700	1,945,900
Landfill postclosure cost	–	–	8,092,101	7,845,991	8,092,101	7,845,991
Total	<u>\$ 91,471,771</u>	<u>\$ 74,863,143</u>	<u>\$ 10,766,532</u>	<u>\$ 10,803,695</u>	<u>\$ 102,238,303</u>	<u>\$ 85,666,838</u>

Pension – footnote 7 and Requires Supplementary Information



OPEB (Retiree Benefits) – *footnote 8*

- Two benefits
 - Enhanced benefits – full medical after retirement
 - Public Employees’ Medical and Hospital Care Act (PEMHCA) = \$136/mo

Changes in the Net OPEB Liability

	Total OPEB Liability	Fiduciary Net Position	Net OPEB Liability
Balances at June 30, 2018	\$ 34,382,436	\$ 17,480,128	\$ 16,902,308
Changes in the year:			
Service cost	349,637	-	349,637
Interest on total OPEB liability	2,117,566	-	2,117,566
Change in benefit terms	(14,836)	-	(14,836)
Differences between expected and actual experience	(6,499,465)	-	(6,499,465)
Changes in assumptions	2,222,210	-	2,222,210
Benefit payments	(1,702,041)	(1,702,041)	-
Contributions from employer	-	2,702,041	(2,702,041)
Net investment income	-	1,310,117	(1,310,117)
Net changes	(3,526,929)	2,310,117	(5,837,046)
Balances at June 30, 2019	\$ 30,855,507	\$ 19,790,245	\$ 11,065,262

Single Audit – *Compliance audit of federal programs*

- Major Programs
 - 14.228: Community Development Block Grant
 - 14.239: Home Investment Partnerships Program
 - 16.575: Victim Witness Assistance
 - 93.959: Block Grants for Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse
- Management Responsibility
 - compliance with federal statutes, regulations, terms and conditions of federal awards
- Auditor Responsibility
 - Express opinion about compliance for each major program
 - Report instances of noncompliance

Single Audit Results – *Top of page 4*

Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

In our opinion, the County of Mono, California, complied, in all material respects, with the types of compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2019.

Other Matters

The results of our auditing procedures disclosed instances of noncompliance, which are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance and which are described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs as Findings 2019-001 and 2019-002. Our opinion on each major federal program is not modified with respect to these matters.

Single Audit Findings – Significant Deficiencies

Finding Number and page number	Major Program	Condition	Corrective Action Plan
2019-001 Pages 11-12	93.959: Block Grants for the Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse	Not tracking all personnel costs to grant activities	Define process Train Monitor implementation
2019-002 Pages 13-14	93.959: Block Grants for the Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse	Late quarterly reporting Not reconciling transactions to quarterly report	Maintain reporting schedule Backup document to reconcile from G/L to reports

May 5, 2020
Regular Meeting

Item # 11a
(Regular Agenda)

CAO

Additional Documents:

**COVID-19 Update – Written Public
Comments Submitted and Read into
Record by Clerk**

Shannon Kendall

From: Misti Sullivan <misti.sullivan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 04, 2020 6:34 PM
To: Shannon Kendall
Cc: John Peters; Stacy Corless; Bob Gardner; Fred Stump; Jennifer Kreitz
Subject: Public Comment for tomorrow's meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mono County Board of Supervisors.

We are writing in regards to the lifting of local stay at home orders.
Here is my public comment:

We know the Governor is going into phase 2 at the end of the week. We want to know where Mono County stands in regards to opening and when we can expect to go into Phase 2.

As many of you know, local businesses are struggling. Speaking from experience, even receiving government assistance, we are very worried for the future of our business and the other businesses around us. If businesses are unable to open soon, I fear many won't ever be able to open. Many of our businesses have financing notes carried by private parties, this means the deferments being offered are not the same as how banks work. We need to open. We can do it safely. We have already implemented all of the suggestions by the Health Department and CDC.

Please help protect the heart of this county, protect all of the people who have worked so hard to bring their businesses here or open and run businesses here. Without businesses opening, taxes will go down and these towns will suffer. There is still time to save them but we must act now!

Also, please open fishing! Locals need this!

Last - please find a way to tell businesses what is going on. We haven't heard anything! How can we plan our businesses without any sort of updates from our local government? You are representing us and need to update us on what is going on. I supplied Jeff Simpson with a contact list for most local businesses. Please find a way to utilize him and the contacts to get messages out to local businesses.

Regards,

Misti Sullivan
Owner/Operator
Twin Lakes Resort
760-932-7751
www.twinlakeresort.com

----- Original message -----

From: kh1841@aol.com

Date: 4/27/20 17:37 (GMT-08:00)

To: jpeters@mono.ca.gov

Subject: Reopening of Northern Mono County

John, please feel free to share this email with the other leaders and decision makers.

Ray Robles and I as well as many local, north Mono County, business owners have been discussing the events of late in regards to keeping ALL of Mono County closed until June 1st, 2020.

We actually think at this time to avoid an all or nothing approach we are proposing a soft opener to avoid more problems than solutions.

We think a Northern Mono County, "soft opening" would be a great opportunity to show the rest of the county and state that it can be done safely with certain limitations in place.

An example would be to lift the current restrictions from Lee Vining north to the county line, on or about the 2nd week of May, somewhere between May 8-11th. As you know, the East and West Walker Rivers are already open to fishing as well as Topaz Lake.

Again, you are only allowing businesses to open, if they choose, with of course, the social distancing, masks, gloves, etc. that are being proposed for safety. As many other rural California counties are doing.

We would also ask that fishing in Northern Mono County be allowed from Lee Vining north.

We believe this would allow some limited tourism to come back to Northern Mono County, without burdening those areas of the county that have increased populations and appear opposed to tourism at this time.

One of our concerns is that the communities of Lee Vining north which also includes Bridgeport and Coleville/Walker have very limited seasonal opportunities to make a living as opposed to the more populated southern Mono communities which have year round opportunities.

We see Mono County as very diverse and we in Northern Mono County, do not have the same income opportunities as say for example the Town of Mammoth Lakes enjoys.

We see the decisions being made for the entire county when it's obvious that Northern Mono County needs to be viewed in a much different light.

We believe this "soft opening" would also provide Mono County with an opportunity to show the rest of the county and the state that this can be implemented in a thoughtful, caring and safe manner to slowly reintroduce tourism back to the area.

If all goes well, a second phase might be to open Tom's Place, Crowley, Rock Creek area and Convict resorts in an additional 10 days from our soft opening.

Again, if that went well then the Town of Mammoth Lakes & June Lake Loop would be the final phase, on or about June 1st.

We think this would benefit the entire county, using this soft opening, 3 tier, approach as opposed to the entire county waiting until June 1st, which as most have commented, might bring a flood of tourism into the entire area all at one time.

Respectfully,

Ken Hoffman

Ray Robles

Mono County residents as well as small business owners

From: Claudine Bovich <cbovich@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 1:19 PM

To: Shannon Kendall; Helen Nunn; John Peters; Stacy Corless; Bob Gardner; Fred Stump; Jennifer Kreitz

Subject: Please Open with Guidelines!

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please let people get back to the mountains. I know you cannot monitor everyone but they need to be responsible for themselves. Keep distance, wash your hands and wear a mask! It is time before so many more jobs are lost and lives are ruined! We do not live up there full time but we do pay taxes and we do support local businesses.

Thank You for listening!

Claudine Bovich

Dear Honorable Supervisors,

I received a draft of proposed regulations for the different types of businesses in our fragile economy. The regulations for lodging concerns me and I am deeply concerned that implementing same will take our county where it does not want to go. For all practical purposes, if you have the ability to enforce and police such regulations, I would be forced to shut-down for good.

Whereas "spacing" is most easily accomplished, and we "serve" no meals, "Launder all bedding in the unit (used or unused) including duvets, comforters, or throw blankets between each guest." is an issue that I would believe no one is prepared or equipped to do.

We waited and waited to hear that Opening Day was, in fact, postponed (though we knew it would be), now a new burden is being proposed for our businesses to operate with some aspects impossible to comply to. I would hope that my County Government supports local businesses by allowing each and every business to operate and succeed now. If burdens are to be levied upon this or any industry, how about a year's notice. We will find out in the next 6 months whether additional steps need be taken but how is it that we be stricken with rules and regulations that becomes impossible to operate?

I beg of you to only "recommend" and not to "require." Thank you.

David Naaden, Reverse Creek Lodge, June Lake 760 914-0604

⏪ Reply all ▾ 🗑️ Delete 🚫 Junk Block ⋮

Public comment re: Reopening

SS Sierra strange <sierrastrangefolks@gmail.com>
m>
Tue 5/5/2020 11:30 AM
Shannon Kendall ▾



CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Sierra Strange here!

We are a new business to the town of Bridgeport, CA. Our shop is an art gallery and retail space. At this time we are preparing ourselves with sanitizers, masks and even a plexiglass glass shield at our register so that we are ready to open when you (the county) say we can. As you know our business, like most others, have been closed since October 2019. Not opening for another season will seriously hurt us financially. If we don't open this season we will have been closed for close to 18 months! Paying rent on our space without income for that long is crippling. Our town needs more business not less and we need our officials to help keep our little town alive.

My husband is an avid fisherman and not being able get on the water has been tough. The emotional weight of the virus is heavy on our minds and we can't even enjoy our area right now. Everything is closed!!! We moved to Sierras close to 10 years ago because of our love for these mountains and especially the fishing. We've hardly left our Bridgeport home since March 16th and are ready to get back to living.

We are wary of the current climate with the coronavirus pandemic and truly feel that with proper precautions and preparedness we can in fact open up Fishing season, Bridgeport businesses and safely enjoy the remaining season.

Thanks for your time. Let's open up!!
- Meghan Weil, Sierra Strange

SIERRA SUNDANCE, INC.

Ph 760.932.1199
375 Aspen Lane | Bridgeport, CA 93517
erinn1881@hotmail.com

May 4, 2020

Mono County Board of "Supervisors"–

Do I really need to send the same letter of disgust every week? Please attempt to lead us out of this economic disaster...

There is so much that I want to say in a respectful manner, but when our state and local government has not treated the small businesses with respect, it makes it very difficult. I know you all are afraid to make the "wrong" decision, so you make quasi-decisions, based on what Dr. Boo has stated. Remember he is a doctor, not an economist. And the Board needs to listen to what is happening to our economy. You are destroying it!

Bridgeport is not Mammoth, we have 5 months to make money, so that we can survive the winter. The Board has effectively made our season 3 months to make money. And then on top of that, you are willing to put in restrictions for seating at restaurants and number of people in a store. I don't know what you are going to require for motels? Oh, but Dr. Boo should know.

We need to open our businesses now! We are smart enough business owners, to know how to run our businesses in a safe and effective manner. Trust us, as we have trusted you for the last month.

Sincerely,

Erinn Wells
CEO – Sierra Sundance, Inc.
DBA – Walker River Lodge
Silver Maple Inn
The Cain House



Shannon Kendall

From: Lynne Greer <lgreer395@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 04, 2020 9:03 AM
To: Shannon Kendall
Subject: Business owners

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board of Mono County,

I am writing in support of safely returning to open up "non-essential" business. We have had so much negative back and forth and know how difficult of a situation we are all in. We understand the Governors orders and the seriousness of the virus.

We were asked to shelter at home, social distance, and give up our jobs. We did that and yes we did flatten the curve. It is now time to begin to rebuild our businesses.

The conversation about tourist is different than the local people who want and need to get back to work. We have been watching the essential businesses packed full of people and the spread has still declined.

I know we have much opposition in opening back up. We are asking to work so we can provide for our families.

I find it disturbing that someone deemed ones job as essential or not. Every job essential if it provides the basic needs of food, shelter, water, and transportation. My daughter in-law was deemed "unessential". My nine year old granddaughter is T1 diabetic. Her medical bills run around \$500.00 per month. Without insulin she dies. I call that essential.

Thanks for reading and hope your are as eager to get your community back to work as we are. No one has to tell you how your budget funded. Thanks for reading.

Lynne Greer

Bishop resident, owner of June Lake Junction

Thanks Shannon for getting this letter to the Supes

⏪ Reply all ✓ 🗑 Delete 🚫 Junk Block ...

Article regarding Modoc and other small counties

① You forwarded this message on Fri 5/1/2020 3:50 PM

DR David Rosky <dave.rosky@gmail.com>
Fri 5/1/2020 3:50 PM

👍 ⏪ ⏩ ...

Shannon Kendall; Bob and Karen Gardner <bob.karen@gmail.com> ✉

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please pass this message to the Mono County Supervisors.

Dear Mono County Supervisors,

I listened with interest to the most recent Board of Supervisors meeting regarding the latest Covid-19 update and opening plan being developed. One item that was discussed was petitioning the Governor to consider differences between counties, especially in the case of smaller, rural counties.

I just happened upon the article linked below regarding Modoc and a few other small counties which are trying to do just that, and thought some of you might find it interesting:

<https://www.politico.com/states/california/story/2020/04/30/small-california-county-prepares-to-defy-newsom-by-opening-bars-churches-1281627>

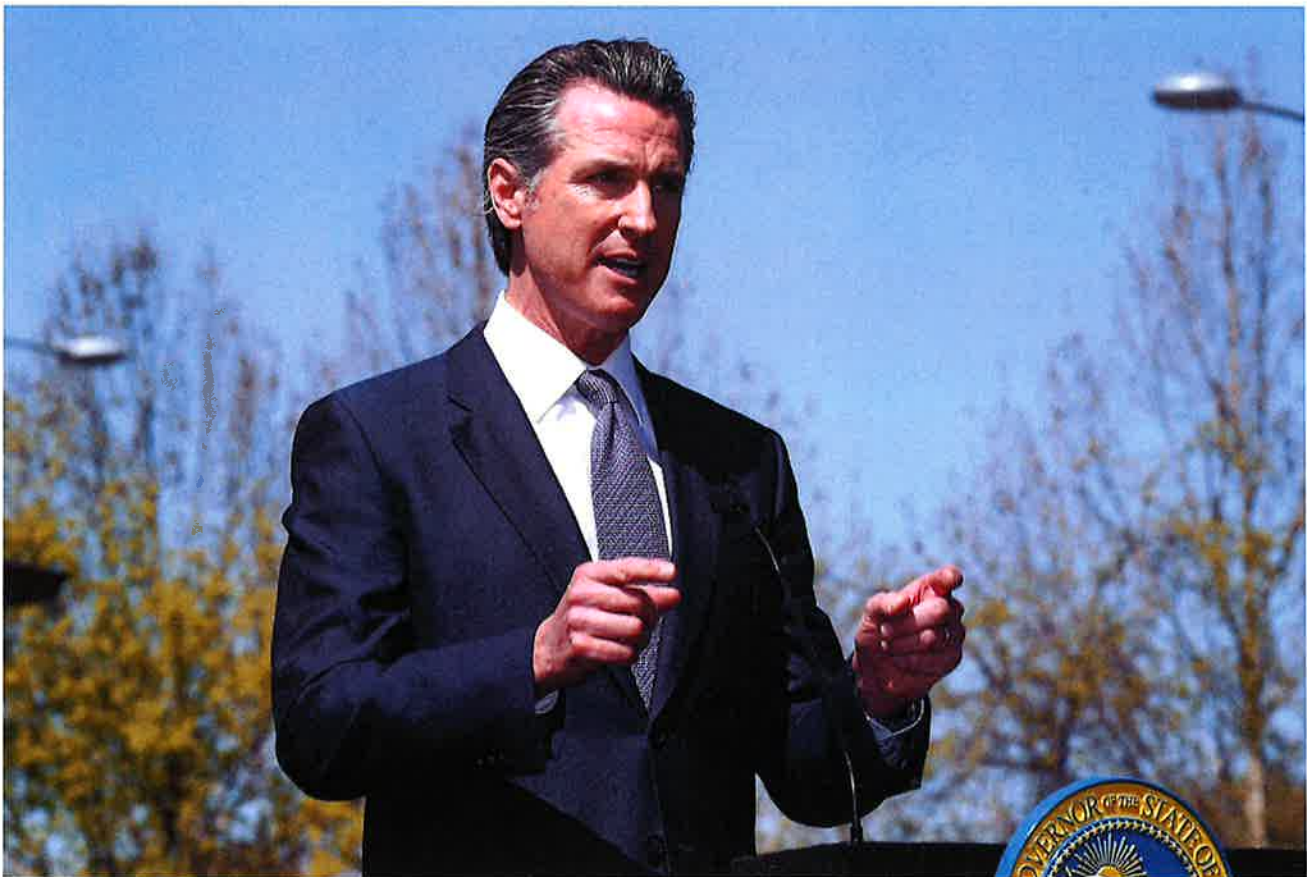
Respectfully,
David Rosky
dave.rosky@gmail.com

POLITICO

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POLITICO CALIFORNIA



Gov. Gavin Newsom | AP Photo

Small California county prepares to defy Newsom by opening bars, churches

By VICTORIA COLLIVER | 04/30/2020 11:41 PM EDT

OAKLAND, Calif. — Modoc County — one of California's most desolate jurisdictions with no known coronavirus cases — says it will allow bars, restaurants and churches to reopen Friday despite Gov. Gavin Newsom's statewide lockdown.

“We’re not in this at all to defy anything. We align with the plans. We’re just at a different phase in this because of where we are and how we live,” Heather Hadwick, deputy director of the county’s Office of Emergency Services, told POLITICO on Thursday.

Modoc officials submitted a plan last week to Newsom outlining their proposal to lift the statewide lockdown order, but the governor has given no indication he intends to free individual counties from his statewide restrictions. The county issued a strategic reopening plan this week that would allow bars, restaurants, churches and non-essential businesses to reopen indoor operations with proper social distancing — all banned under Newsom’s current restrictions.

The plan still recommends that all at-risk residents — those 65 and older or who have underlying health conditions — remain at home. Restaurants and bars would have to cut their maximum capacity in half.

The rural outpost, like many counties far from the coast, diverges from the California known nationally. Registered Republicans outnumber Democrats more than 2-1, while 71 percent of voters chose Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

Maintaining physical distance is easier in the county of 9,600 residents, located in a 4,200-square-mile corner of northeast California that borders Oregon and Nevada.

“It’s empty, and that’s on a normal day. If there’s one or two people in line at the grocery store, that’s odd.” she said.

Newsom on Thursday acknowledged he’s received requests from Modoc and several other communities requesting to ease the restrictions, but set “the next few weeks” as the timeline. He said counties may be “more prescriptive and restrictive” than the state guidelines, but looser measures will conflict with the state order.

“Nothing would please me more than pleasing those local elected officials and to help them help all of us move through this pandemic,” he said. “But we’re not out of the woods — no part of the state, no part of this country, few parts of the globe have been immune to this virus.”

Hadwick admitted the county will be reopening against state orders, but said the governor “didn’t say he was challenging it” in his remarks. If the state cracks down on Modoc County, “we would work with him to try to figure something out that would work with our county.”

Last week, lawmakers and local leaders representing six rural Northern California counties — Yuba, Colusa, Tehama, Butte, Sutter and Glenn — sent a letter to the governor requesting permission for “a careful and phased reopening of our local economies.”

Other counties, including Lassen County this week, have submitted plans for reopening. Their argument is that the less densely populated areas have had very different experiences with the

pandemic than other parts of the state, including the Bay Area counties that this week announced plans to continue their shelter-in-place restrictions through the end of May.

Lassen, Modoc, Trinity and Sierra are the four California counties without a single confirmed coronavirus case.

“Somebody has to step up for rural California and we just happened to be the first,” Hadwick said.

While the majority of businesses in the county are already deemed essential, Hadwick said it would be different for others — be it the one-chair barber or the few small restaurants — to recover financially if the restrictions continue.

“Covid-19 looks very different in Modoc,” she said. “And it’s not here.”

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