



**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP**  
**of the Ventana Chapter**  
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Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Re: CORE RFP Award Recommendations**

**Date of Meeting: November 19, 2024      Agenda Item No: 7**

The Sierra Club Opposes Funding Cuts to Community Service Agencies, Urges Postponement of Budget Decision

Honorable Supervisors:

The Sierra Club opposes the staff proposal currently before you to drastically reduce or eliminate funding for more than two dozen essential community programs. We recommend that your Board extend the period of review until at least January, 2025, to more carefully evaluate the devastating cuts proposed by the Human Services Department (HSD) and maintain funding for many long standing, valuable programs that benefit the environment, seniors, children, mental health, food security, housing safety and equity.

We urge your Board not to hastily execute the proposed budget cuts that were released in summary form only recently, to allow more time for yourselves and for community groups to fully evaluate your budget allocations and make sure that any reductions are implemented in a reasonable, balanced approach with transparency and accountability.

Among our foremost concerns in the proposed restructuring of community funding are the following:

- Cutting ongoing environmental stewardship programs such as the River Stewards and Watershed Rangers, risking damage or loss to previously invested programs and initiatives
- Disproportionate reductions in food programs, in a time of food price inflation and widespread food insecurity for seniors, children and veterans
- Cutting or eliminating multiple programs for seniors, leaving gaping holes in senior safety nets and resources

- Imbalanced cuts to childcare programs, leaving families with significantly reduced alternatives

We question why this community funding issue being decided now, when all other decisions concerning the 2025-26 FY budget will be made much later, by the incoming Board. It would make more sense to make these budgetary decisions at the same time, to provide a more accurate context of actual budgetary resources and constraints. The decisions on community funding are typically made much closer to the beginning of the fiscal year when all the budgetary categories can be considered and evaluated together.

Please continue this critically important budgetary item at least until at least next January, if not until Spring of 2025, and take the time to carefully evaluate the proposed cuts, how they were developed, what their impact will be and how their otherwise catastrophic effects can be prevented or mitigated. Funds are available within the budget category to implement a much more responsible and balanced allocation program. With judicious and balanced analysis, and with transparent, inclusive, and deliberative community engagement, your Board will be able to preserve vital program funding currently proposed for elimination, and to ensure that any unavoidable cuts are implemented in a way that minimizes the adverse impact on our most vulnerable communities.

Thank you sincerely for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,



Michael Guth  
Santa Cruz County Group of the Ventana Chapter  
Sierra Club