July 28, 2020

Mendocino County Air Quality Management District

306 East Gobbi Street Ukiah, CA 95482

*Submitted via email to* *mcaqmd@mendocinocounty.org*

**RE: Request for suspension of facility operations at the Mendocino Forest Products Wood Pellet Production Plant (1) in light of the Covid pandemic and (2) due to inadequate environmental review in locating the plant in a residential/agricultural neighborhood.**

To the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District:

Due to the threat posed to the community and public health by the polluting operationsat the Mendocino Forest Products Wood Pellet Production Plant in Calpella, we, the undersigned organizations and concerned residents of Mendocino County, request the suspension of facility operations.

Wood pellet production releases heavy amounts of harmful pollutants including: Carbon monoxide; nitrogen oxide; Greenhouse gasses; Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC’s); fine particulate matter at the 2.5 level; acetaldehyde; formaldehyde and methanol. Breathing the pollutants emitted from wood pellet production plants can trigger a variety of health problems particularly to children, the elderly and people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma.

The Mendocino Wood Pellet Production Plant, operated by Mendocino Forest Products, is located one mile from the Reservation of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians and in the same valley as the Redwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians and is situated a block away from the Consolidated Tribal Health Project (CTHP) Clinic, a health clinic which serves 9 Tribes, and a few blocks away from a public and private school. Literally downstream from the plant is a working class neighborhood consisting mostly of Hispanic residents and families.

Since the Wood Pellet Production Plant’s opening in August 2017, it has been emitting harmful pollutant matter into the atmosphere, endangering the respiratory health of the community. On several occasions, the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District found the Plant emitting pollutants in violation of its operating permit. Community members have addressed this threat to public health to the Mendocino Board of Supervisors, and have presented scientific research linking toxic air pollution from wood pellet plants leading to irreversible damage to lung health.

In this time of a Covid-19 pandemic, allowing the plant to continue operations and release pollutants that increase the threat of respiratory and cardiovascular ailments is misguided and a danger to the citizens of this county. People with Covid-19 who live in U.S. regions with high levels of air pollution are more likely to die from the disease than people who live in less polluted areas, according to a new nationwide study from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. *Please find attached a comprehensive list of facts from a variety of scientific sources whose authors are listed for further reference.*

From research into the public record of the County’s approval process for the plant’s construction we have found that the facility’s potential negative health impacts were never evaluated through a proper environmental review process. We are extremely concerned at the lack of transparency, public process and notification regarding the plant’s alarming violations.

In light of the threat posed by the plant’s emissions to the health of nearby residents (especially sensitive receptors), as well as the documented violations of its permits and the lack of a proper environmental and public review, we the undersigned organizations and concerned residents of Mendocino County call for the suspension of facility operations at the plant, especially during the pandemic.

We, the undersigned strongly believe the Mendocino Forest Products’ Wood Pellet Production Plant should cease operations immediately and should not be allowed to re-open unless and until a thorough environmental review process with robust civic engagement opportunities concludes the facility’s emissions are safe in its current location.

In health and environmental justice for all.

BACH – Bay Area Coalition for Headwaters

 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite H

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 bach@headwaterspreserve.org

Biofuelwatch

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 Redway CA  95560

 GaryHughes.bfw@gmail.com

CEJC - California Environmental Justice Coalition

 Thomas Helme , Coordinaor

 [www.cejcoalition.org](http://www.cejcoalition.org)

 cejcoalition@cejcoalition.org

CAM - Climate Action Mendocino

 climateactionmendocino@gmail.com

EPIC -Environmental Protection Information Center

 145 G St. Suite A

 Arcata, CA 95521

 [www.wildcalifornia.org](http://www.wildcalifornia.org)

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice

 315 Sutter St. Second Floor

 San Francisco CA 94108

 [www.greenaction.org](http://www.greenaction.org)

 greenaction@greenaction.org

Humboldt Earth First!

 contactefhum@gmail.com

Priscilla Hunter, Tribal Elder

 Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians

 pchunter@coyotevalley-nsn.gov

MEC - Mendocino Environmental Center

 106 W. Standley St.

 Ukiah CA 95462

Redwood Nation Earth First!

 P.O. Box 219

 Bayside CA 95524

SEIJ - Social Environmental Indigenous Justice

 630 S. Main St.

 Willits CA 95490

WEC - Willits Environmental Center

 630 S. Main St.

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 [www.willitsenvironmentalcenter.org](http://www.willitsenvironmentalcenter.org)

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cc:

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