COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/3/2026

File #: 26-49

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Sheriff

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:
Drought Resilience Plan and SB 552 Compliance

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive the report, from the Humboldt County Drought Task Force Steering Committee, on the final draft of the Drought Resilience Plan, satisfying California Senate Bill 552, and brief update on current drought potential in Humboldt County.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities
Strategic Plan Category: 1009 - Expand county infrastructure resilience

DISCUSSION:
The Humboldt County Drought Task Force was established on May 25, 2021, by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. The task force has been directed to explore and develop potential short, medium, and long-term actions for a coordinated, county-wide response as well as track local impacts resulting from drought. Since its creation, the Drought Task Force has met to discuss local impacts and response and mitigation strategies, providing updates to the Board of Supervisors and the community via formal reports and social and conventional media.

Though the drought in California has subsided, and significant amounts of rainfall have reduced Humboldt County's short-term risk of drought-related impacts, Senate Bill 552 (SB 552) was passed in September 2021 requiring, among other things, counties to maintain a standing drought task force, and development of a plan to facilitate drought and water shortage preparedness for state small water systems (serving 5 to 14 connections), domestic wells and other privately supplied homes

within the county's jurisdiction. The plan must evaluate potential drought and water shortage risk and propose interim and long-term solutions for state small water systems and domestic wells within the county.

To achieve the goal of SB 552 compliance, members of the original Humboldt County Drought Task Force, with the assistance of department staff comprising a steering committee, have been working with Stantec, a consultant with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to discuss how they can provide direct assistance to Humboldt County to satisfy SB 552 requirements. In the development of what is called the Humboldt County Drought Resilience Plan (DRP), efforts include opportunities for public engagement to identify meaningful actions and strategies that increase the resilience of local communities in drought and water shortage events.

The DRP will be used as the central reference document to guide county and partner actions related to drought and water shortage preparedness. The document includes a risk assessment of physical and social vulnerabilities using public domain tools such as the Water Shortage Vulnerability Explorer, developed by the Department of Water Resources, the California Health Places Index and other local contributions.

In satisfying the SB 552 mandate, the DRP provides a framework for identifying vulnerabilities, prioritizing projects, and coordinating implementation across departments, water systems, and jurisdictions. It serves as a foundational background and justification document for future grant applications, essential for implementation for many of the articulated actions, by documenting needs, risks, and proposed solutions in a format aligned with state and federal funding requirements. It is informed by the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, General Safety Plan and other resilience elements which improves the County planning processes rather than treated as a stand-alone issue.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
There is minimal financial impact to receiving this report, and while staff costs for the Drought Task Force were not included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget, participating departments have, so far, been able to carry out your Board's direction related to the task force without additional funding.

STAFFING IMPACT:
N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
California Department of Water Resources, Stantec Inc., Department of Health & Human Service, Public Health Branch, Division of Environmental Health, Planning and Building Department

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Drought Resiliency Plan

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: N/A
File No.: N/A