



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/4/2022

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File #: 22-406

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** County Administrative Office

**Agenda Section:** Departmental

**SUBJECT:**

Censure of Karen Paz Dominguez, Auditor-Controller

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Consider Adopting Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_ Regarding Censure of Karen Paz Dominguez, Auditor-Controller.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

N/A

**DISCUSSION:**

On March 22, your Board met in closed session to discuss written communication of potential litigation regarding actions of the Humboldt County Auditor-Controller and Board of Supervisors. Your Board unanimously approved release of the closed session update regarding workplace misconduct findings against the Auditor-Controller and scheduled a special meeting on April 4, 2022, to discuss potential censure of the Auditor-Controller.

In June 2021, your Board authorized a fact-finding investigation into multiple allegations of workplace misconduct and delayed payments by the Auditor-Controller. That investigation was substantially delayed due to unforeseen circumstances but was recently completed. The investigator made sustained findings and determined that it was more likely than not that the following behavior took place:

- Karen Paz Dominguez has engaged in retaliatory, harassing and/or bullying behavior in the exercise of her duties as an elected Auditor-Controller.
- Karen Paz Dominguez's financial decisions resulted in increased staff workload and financial losses to the county.

Workplace misconduct findings were also found from a separate investigation in 2018 and the current investigation also made findings regarding delayed transactions and reports which have been discussed publicly by your Board on numerous occasions over the last several years.

As noted in the attached resolution, elected officials are not subject to the normal avenues of employee discipline, however they should never consider them above reproach. The types of behavior substantiated demonstrate harassing and bullying behavior within the workplace, which is not acceptable under the county's Abusive Conduct Policy (Attachment 2) and other policies.

While a censure does not impose a punishment or penalty, it is a legislative act within the authority of the Board to express disapproval of the actions of the party being censured and to recommend remedial actions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Your Board has received multiple notices of potential litigation related to the actions of the Auditor-Controller, in addition to sustained findings that the Auditor-Controller's actions have resulted in increased staff workload and financial losses to the county. While adoption of a resolution of censure does not itself remediate these issues, the suggested actions included in the resolution, if followed, have the potential to mitigate future potential litigation.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by investing in county employees , providing community-appropriate levels of service.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

All county employees,

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution of Censure of Karen Paz Dominguez, Auditor-Controller
2. Abusive Conduct Policy
3. March 22, 2022 Summary of Findings

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: K-1  
Meeting of: March 22, 2022  
File No.: 22-358