



November 23, 2021

TO: Malinda Matson

Economic Development Representative

Northern and Coastal California

U.S. Department of Commerce

Economic Development Administration

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Dear Member of the EDA EAA Review Committee.

On behalf of the Noyo Harbor District, I want to express our strong support for the proposal, *Improving Coastal Resilience: Planning and Design of the Noyo Ocean Science Center* in Fort Bragg, California. Mendocino County's economy has been devastated in recent years by destructive wildfires, historic droughts, and a collapse in our kelp forest ecosystem. In addition, the indiscriminate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have further underscored the county's lack of industry diversification and long-standing infrastructure vulnerabilities have been pushed to the forefront.

The Noyo Center for Marine Science's flagship project—the Noyo Ocean Science Center—is ideally positioned to implement a marine-based economic development strategy that will greatly enhance the resiliency of our region. The Noyo Center for Marine Science was established to address the critical gap in marine science in this region of the northern California coast and to promote blue economy-based enterprises that are regenerative rather than extractive. In addition, the Noyo Center's full economic contributions to the coastal economy will be realized through its ongoing community support and partnership with West Business Development Center, which will provide services for entrepreneurial growth.

As a partner in this emerging "blue economy", the Noyo Harbor District supports this proposal because it will stimulate economic growth within the marine and fishing community. Our local fisher's have been hit hard and they struggle to support themselves and their families in the light of ever changing regulations, climate change and the collapse of key fisheries. The Noyo Ocean Science Center will provide a place for them to pivot to where their skill sets will be understood and prized.

In closing, we believe in the future of Mendocino County and its potential to play a significant role in regional growth. This grant award will be a sound investment in a resilient economic future that will deliver the growth strategies needed to create new job opportunities, commercialization of new technologies, long-term recovery from ongoing economic shocks, and the opportunity to address climate-driven ecological imbalances in the local ocean environment.

This partnership of the Noyo Center and West Business Development Center is vital to the success of a regional marine-based, environmentally sustainable economic development strategy. We ask that you fully fund the proposal: *Improving Coastal Resilience: Planning and Design of the Noyo Ocean Science Center*.

Sincerely,

Jim Hurst

Jim Hurst, Chair
Noyo Harbor Commission
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