



736 F Street
Arcata CA 95521

<i>City Manager</i> 707-822-5953	<i>Environmental Services</i> 707-822-8184	<i>Police</i> 707-822-2428	<i>Recreation</i> 707-822-7091
<i>Community Development</i> 707-822-5955	<i>Finance</i> 707-822-5951	<i>Engineering</i> 707-825-2128	<i>Transportation</i> 707-822-3775

November 16, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
VIA Email: ExternalAffairs@gov.ca.gov

Re: Project Roomkey Extension Support

Dear Governor Newsom:

The City of Arcata thanks you for your leadership and efforts to protect and support Californians during this unprecedented public health crisis. As temperatures get colder and the rains start here on the North Coast, the City is requesting an extension of Project Roomkey through the winter and spring season. The Project Roomkey Initiative in California has unequivocally protected the most vulnerable people in our communities, prevented the spread of COVID-19 and protected bed capacity in our small, rural healthcare system.

Based on the research and index created by The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism that analyzes homelessness and poverty rates, shelter beds and physicians in counties throughout the country, Humboldt County received a homeless vulnerability index of 4, the highest possible. The biennial point in time count in January 2020 found that more than 1,400 people in Humboldt County had experienced unsheltered homelessness on the night of January 22, which would put Humboldt County's per capita homeless rate at about three times the state average.

With limited congregate shelter space available, further limited by protocols designed to slow the spread of COVID-19, Humboldt County needs the continuation of individual sheltering to protect the most vulnerable members of our community through the impending cold winter months. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the City of Arcata and our non-profit partner, Arcata House Partnership, have worked expediently to answer the call to protect and serve our unhoused community.

When there was funding for parking lot shelters, we moved quickly to establish two sites in Arcata providing tents, cots and sleeping bags, three meals a day, and individualized assessment and support services to transition to longer term housing. We served 97 individuals for one or more nights at the sites totaling 3,329 "bed nights" and over 10,000 meals served to those staying on the lots between April and August. Concurrently, for those too vulnerable for the tent shelter sites, we established agreements with

local hotels for Project Roomkey. This program has been successful and is vital to making it through the months ahead.

In order to continue to be a full partner with the State in saving lives, protecting our communities, and ultimately recovering from this crisis, we need your help. The City of Arcata appreciates your consideration of extending Project Roomkey and looks forward to discussing further in the coming days how we can continue to best protect unhoused Californians together.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Winkler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Winkler, Mayor
City of Arcata

cc:

Senator Mike McGuire, Senator.McGuire@senate.ca.gov & VIA FAX: (916) 651-4902

Congressman Jared Huffman, John.Driscoll@mail.house.gov

Assembly Member Jim Wood, Ruth.Valenzuela@asm.ca.gov & VIA FAX: (707) 445-6607 & (916) 319-2102

Sara Sanders, League Regional Public Affairs Manager, sanders@cacities.org

Meg Desmond, League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org