

## **Mendocino County Public Health Advisory Board Requests County Study Precautionary Principle**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The 19-member Mendocino County Public Health Advisory Board (MCPHAB) unanimously agreed to request that the County Board of Supervisors study the implementation of the Precautionary Principle and its effect on County decision-making. The decision by the Public Health Advisory Board is the first step towards the County's adoption of the Precautionary Principle. The Principle represents a new way of approaching decisions that affect the environment and human health. (See <http://www.environmentalcommons.org/precaution-background.html> for more details)

MCPHAB was encouraged to draft the letter to the County Board of Supervisors after hearing an educational talk on the Precautionary Principle given by Debbie Raphael of the San Francisco Department of the Environment. Ms. Raphael was a key figure in San Francisco's passage of the Precautionary Principle ordinance in 2003. A newly formed committee made up of individuals throughout the county and spearheaded by Environmental Commons' Britt Bailey hosted and supported Raphael's presentation. The committee includes Doug Hammerstrom (Ft. Bragg City Council), Greg Krouse (Sustainable Landscaper), Dr. Marvin Trotter (Public Health Officer), David Colfax (5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor), Dr. Melissa Gosland (Redwood Coast Medical Services), Dr. Alice Diefenbach (Centers for Disease Control), Doug Mosel (Californians for GE-Free Agriculture), and Sara O'Donnell (Cancer Resource Center of Mendocino).

"This is a truly momentous day for Mendocino County. We are on the forefront of a new way of making decisions – decisions that will be better for our environment and subsequently our health," said Britt Bailey of Environmental Commons.

According to Sara O'Donnell, MCPHAB member and Director of the Cancer Resource Center, "We believe the time is right for our County and its citizens to be democratically involved in choosing the best alternative with the least potential impact on

human health and the environment. For years we have made decisions based on a traditional type of risk assessment that tries to justify ‘harm,’ and the Precautionary Principle reverses that trend.”

Greg Krouse, a sustainable landscaper and host of a toxics-related radio program, stated, “The notion that the county could adopt the Precautionary Principle is very exciting. I think that the greater democracy this process affords will eliminate the loggerheads that often accompany controversial issues.”

The County will examine the possibility of implementing the Precautionary Principle while the County’s citizens will be offered opportunities to learn more about the Principle. A key element of the Precautionary Principle includes participatory decisions that are transparent and democratically derived.

See attached <http://www.environmentalcommons.org/precaution-background.html> for more details on the Precautionary Principle.

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