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**Letter of Concern and Support for Councilwoman Melinda Orbach RE: Item 9B in tonight's Capitola City Council Agenda**

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**From** Stephanie Barron <81lulu81@gmail.com>  
**Date** Thu 9/25/2025 11:29 AM  
**To** City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Letter of Concern and Support for Councilwoman Melinda Orbach RE: Item 9B  
in tonight's Sept 25 Capitola City Council Agenda

Good evening, Councilmembers,

I'm writing because I'm deeply concerned about what this hearing represents.

By moving forward with a public code of conduct complaint — despite a public apology, active mediation, and no precedent for agendizing past complaints — this Council is sending a dangerous message.

It legitimizes personal and political attacks — particularly those targeting women of color in leadership. Councilmember Orbach spoke up to set boundaries. That should not make her a target.

We've seen this pattern across the country: women, especially women of color, being held to different standards, scrutinized more harshly, and punished for asserting themselves. Capitola should not follow that path.

At a time when our city, county, state, and country faces real, urgent challenges, this process feels less like accountability and more like intimidation.

I urge you: dismiss the complaint, protect the integrity of mediation, and apologize to Melinda for reinforcing harmful dynamics by agendizing this matter. Capitola can do better. I hope to see greater solidarity and mutual respect from this honorable council, the work will only get harder and we are stronger together when we do not let our values get tuned out by the loudest in the room. Please keep those of us on the margins of power and privilege in your mind as equally deserving of your courage and advocacy.

Thank you.

Stephanie Barron Lu,

WILDR co-chair