



CITY OF CLEARLAKE

City Council

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Letter of Support Endorsing the Revitalize Rural America Act

MEETING DATE:

October 15, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Alan Flora, City Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT: ☐ Information only ☐ Discussion ☒ Action Item

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL/BOARD:

The City Council is being asked to consider approving a Letter of Support endorsing the Revitalize Rural America Act and authorize the Mayor to sign.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

On October 6, 2026, U.S. Congressmen Mike Thompson and James Gallagher addressed correspondence to Mayor Dirk Slooten requesting that the City of Clearlake endorse the bipartisan Revitalize Rural America Act.

As one of Lake County's primary population centers, Clearlake delivers vital public services while navigating acute socioeconomic constraints, limited administrative capacity, persistent workforce shortages, and vulnerability to natural disasters such as wildfires. Rather than a standard resolution of support, staff have prepared a targeted letter that endorses the intent of the Act while conveying specific policy recommendations to ensure the final bill effectively addresses the operational realities of smaller incorporated rural municipalities.

The Revitalize Rural America Act establishes critical federal support mechanisms across workforce development, federal grant acquisition, healthcare access, housing, and disaster preparedness.

The proposed letter endorses the measure while formally submitting five key enhancements for congressional consideration:

1. **Broad and Consistent Rural Eligibility:** Urging federal definitions based on population scale, economic disadvantage, and demonstrated need—preventing rigid geographic criteria from inadvertently disqualifying small, incorporated cities like Clearlake.
2. **Comprehensive Municipal Workforce Incentives:** Expanding tax incentives and student loan forgiveness across the full spectrum of local government operations (including public works, building inspection, planning, engineering, finance, administration, and public safety) where rural recruitment deficits are acute.

3. **Reduction of Grant Financial Barriers:** Pairing expanded technical grant assistance with waived or reduced local match requirements and streamlined reporting for economically distressed rural communities.
4. **Direct Local Government Infrastructure & Resilience Support:** Ensuring federal disaster hardening and infrastructure funding directly assists municipalities responsible for public hazard mitigation and post-disaster recovery, rather than solely assisting private parcel owners.
5. **Administrative Simplicity & Flexibility:** Minimizing compliance costs, complex reporting mandates, and overhead burdens that deter small jurisdictions operating with lean staffing levels from accessing federal aid programs.

Transmitting this letter ensures Clearlake's distinct operational and community needs are directly incorporated into congressional committee deliberations as the bill advances.

OPTIONS:

1. Move to approve the proposed Letter of Support and authorize the Mayor to sign.
2. Other direction

FISCAL IMPACT:

☒ None ☐ Budgeted Item? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Budget Adjustment Needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, amount of appropriation increase: \$

Affected fund(s): ☐ General Fund ☐ Measure P Fund ☐ Measure V Fund ☐ Other:

Comments: Authorizing the letter of support carries no impact on the City of Clearlake General Fund. If enacted with the recommended provisions, the legislation will improve the City's eligibility for federal funding opportunities, reduce local match burdens, and support staff recruitment and retention efforts.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

- ☒ Goal #1: Economic Development
- ☒ Goal #2: Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- ☐ Goal #3: Celebrate Clearlake
- ☐ Goal #4: Clean
- ☒ Goal #5: Fiscal Sustainability
- ☒ Goal #6: Safe

SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

Move to approve the proposed Letter of Support and authorize the Mayor to sign.

- ☒ **Attachments:**
 - 1) Draft Support Letter
 - 2) Correspondence from Members of Congress Mike Thompson and James Gallagher