

RESOLUTION 2025-X

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, OPPOSING THE FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS AND SUBSEQUENT LOCAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Mammoth Lakes is a community of 7,187 residents located in rural Mono County, California; and

WHEREAS, recreation on our public lands is the backbone of the Town of Mammoth Lakes' tourism and recreation-based economy, which contributes to the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy. Federal staffing cuts on surrounding public lands will lead to fewer maintained trails, unmaintained trash and restroom facilities, campground closures, and a diminished visitor experience. Anticipated impacts including a loss in visitation, reduced economic support of local businesses, increased risk of unsupported camping within US Forest Service lands with no regulation or controls around campfires, heightening risk of wildland fires, increases in illegal parking, wildland degradation, closure of public restroom facilities, and increased trash, impacts related to public safety, litter and human waste pollution; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty around US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management funding cuts, staffing reductions and contract delays provides no opportunity for our region and community to plan ahead to ensure appropriate messaging regarding campsite closures, restroom closures, education regarding campfire safety and lack of available trash disposal facilities; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty around US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management funding cuts, staffing reductions, and contract delays creates undue financial and economic strain on local governments as they attempt to ensure restrooms are cleaned, campgrounds are opened, trails maintained, visitors centers remain open and other essential services are occurring at appropriate frequencies. Regardless of federal staffing, millions of visitors will still be coming to the Mammoth Lakes area and adjacent federal lands; and

WHEREAS, the economy of the Town of Mammoth Lakes is dependent on recreation, and the completion of recreation projects is dependent on US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management staff completing environmental analysis (National Environmental Policy Act – NEPA) related to these projects. Staffing and budget cuts are further shrinking the ability for these agencies to complete NEPA work, affecting the financial viability of the Town of Mammoth Lakes recreation-based economy; and

WHEREAS, Mammoth Lakes is located along US Highway 395, a thoroughfare that is essential to transportation, commerce, and evacuation in the event of wildfires or other catastrophic events. Two essential local routes provide the only direct access to the Town from Highway 395 (CA Highway 203 and Mammoth Scenic Loop), along with serving as the only emergency exits. Federal funding for capital improvements, maintenance and transit are crucial to safe operation, reduced traffic congestion, mobility, and emergency access on these highways; and

WHEREAS, towns and cities, including the Town of Mammoth Lakes, rely on a variety of federal funding sources and partnerships with federal agencies. Delays in payment processing and freezing of federal funding are creating significant uncertainty for our Town operations. Examples of local impacts include the following:

- Potential freezes to transit funds stand to reduce our ability to maintain local bus service, reduce congestion, provide for safe evacuations, and replace fleet vehicles.
- FEMA reimbursement delays and potential changes to FEMA staffing and/or fund availability could threaten disaster recovery.
- Freezes in federal funding related to the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP), a forest health project that is absolutely essential to the long-term wildfire resilience of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. This project will also have large economic impacts on local businesses through job creation, contracts, and other means to complete this vital work.
- The pauses in funding and reductions in force are creating uncertainty for many local projects, including local trails initiatives and other regional projects in Mono County that would serve as a recreational asset to the region, driving tourism and business to our communities; and

WHEREAS, the availability and affordability of housing is a significant challenge in our region and the Mammoth Lakes community has prioritized building and acquiring affordable, quality housing for members of the local workforce, that are the backbone of our tourist-driven economic engine. Reductions in force and funding freezes, along with tariffs, will significantly hamper efforts to complete projects along with increasing the cost to build critical infrastructure and housing; and

WHEREAS, Mammoth Lakes community-based organizations and social services rely on federal fund sources; federal funding cuts, freezes, and budgetary uncertainty pose potential local impacts to the continuation of critical community services.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Mammoth Lakes opposes the significant, catastrophic impacts to our community and local economy that will result from federal funding cuts to local programs.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of March 2025.

CHRIS BUBSER, Mayor

ATTEST:

JAMIE GRAY, Town Clerk