

Delivered via email on September 8, 2022

Dear Supervisor Bohn and Commissioner Bongio,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we call for the resignation or removal of Commissioner Alan Bongio from the Humboldt County Planning Commission.

In a recent Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Bongio used racist and other offensive language when discussing sovereign tribal governments. Representatives from local sovereign tribal governments and fellow Planning Commissioners immediately recognized and objected to Mr. Bongio, who not only did not apologize but made further disturbing statements. Mr. Bongio has since failed to apologize for his actions, only apologizing for an “offense” he may have caused. Mr. Bongio cannot represent the people of Humboldt County while failing to give even a modicum of respect to local sovereign tribal governments. His behavior makes clear that he is not fit for this position.

Mr. Bongio’s responsibilities as Planning Commissioner require an understanding of local, state, and federal regulations protecting tribal cultural resources and the environment. These include the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the California Coastal Act of 1976, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, the 2014 CEQA Guidelines update for protecting Tribal Cultural Resources, and state law governing tribal consultation by cities and counties. Anyone who cannot impartially apply these regulations to any and all applicants is unfit to serve in the role of Planning Commissioner.

The Planning Commission represents Humboldt County and all of its residents. Mr. Bongio’s conduct strains relationships between Humboldt County and sovereign tribal governments and trustee agencies, and makes government-to-government relationships more difficult.

Mr. Bongio’s conduct is unacceptable for a representative of Humboldt County and we ask for his immediate resignation or removal.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler
Executive Director
Environmental Protection Information Center

Jennifer Kalt
Executive Director
Humboldt Baykeeper

Caroline Griffith
Executive Director
Northcoast Environmental Center

Colin Fiske
Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Tamara McFarland, Caroline Griffith, Leila Roberts, Kate Lancaster
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Brenda Pérez
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Matt Simmons
Co-Director
Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility

Alicia Hamann
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Friends of the Eel River

Mike Cipra
Executive Director
Friends of the Dunes