

From: [Siana Emmons](#)
To: [Amy Nilsen](#)
Subject: FW: Preserving the River Lodge as a Community and Tourism Asset
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 11:39:22 AM
Attachments: [ATT00001.png](#)

I didn't respond, however I'm happy to let her know it will be distributed to Council, but wanted you to review first.

Thanks!

Siana L. Emmons, CMC
City Clerk/Human Resources Director
City of Fortuna
Phone: (707) 725-1409
621 11th Street, Fortuna, CA 95540
<http://www.friendlyfortuna.com>

***City of Fortuna Administrative Offices are Closed on Friday.



From: Meredith Matthews <meredith.hlaredwoods@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 11:30 AM
To: Siana Emmons <semmons@ci.fortuna.ca.us>
Subject: Preserving the River Lodge as a Community and Tourism Asset

You don't often get email from meredith.hlaredwoods@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Please forward to the City Manager and City Council

Dear City Manager Nilsen and Members of the Fortuna City Council,

On behalf of the Fortuna Lodging Alliance, I am writing to express our concern regarding discussions about leasing the Fortuna River Lodge in a manner that would eliminate or significantly reduce its availability for events, conferences, weddings, and other visitor-serving activities.

The Fortuna Lodging Alliance has long recognized the River Lodge as an important community asset and a driver of overnight visitation. In fact, the Alliance invested \$25,000 toward upgrades to the facility's sound system because of the value it provides to the local

hospitality industry and the broader Fortuna economy.

While we understand and appreciate the City's need to address ongoing budget challenges, we urge the Council to carefully consider the economic impact of removing the River Lodge from the visitor economy. Unlike many city facilities, the River Lodge serves as a destination venue that attracts guests from outside the area for weddings, meetings, tournaments, reunions, trainings, and special events. These visitors stay in local hotels, dine in local restaurants, purchase fuel and supplies, and support businesses throughout the community.

At a time when the City has reported a decline in Transient Occupancy Tax revenues, preserving assets that generate overnight stays should be an important consideration. Decisions regarding the future use of the River Lodge should include an evaluation of the facility's contribution to local lodging demand and its role in supporting tourism-related economic activity.

The Fortuna Lodging Alliance would be concerned about any long-term lease arrangement that removes the River Lodge from public event use or significantly limits its ability to host activities that generate visitor spending and hotel occupancy. While partnerships with public agencies and nonprofit organizations may offer opportunities to reduce operating costs, we encourage the City to prioritize models that maintain the facility's role as an event venue and visitor-serving asset.

We respectfully request that the City engage local lodging stakeholders as discussions continue and that any evaluation of future River Lodge operations include consideration of the economic benefits generated through tourism, overnight visitation, and local business activity.

The River Lodge is more than a building. It is an important piece of Fortuna's visitor infrastructure and a valuable contributor to the local economy. We hope the City will pursue solutions that preserve and strengthen that role for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the Fortuna community.

Sincerely,

Meredith Matthews
Executive Director
Humboldt Lodging Alliance

Meredith Matthews
Executive Director
Humboldt Lodging Alliance
(707)499.0809

