

Letter: Howard saved my fishing business

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As we near the end of the primary races, I think it's very important to point out the positive points about our current District 3 Supervisor, Chris Howard.

As a 30-year small business owner in Del Norte County and life-long resident, Chris and I had crossed paths several times. First when he worked for Miller Rellim Redwood Company, then again when he worked for Arcata Redwood, which is now known as Green Diamond Resource Company. But it wasn't until he became a Supervisor that our relationship became stronger.

As my fishing guide business became more successful, I started involving myself in the political and regulatory process that governs my chosen industry. As most of you know, the commercial and sport fishing industries have been under attack in California for years and in most cases have been pitted against each.

It was during one of these attacks that with seemingly nowhere to turn, I called my Supervisor, Chris Howard. It's was with open arms and ears that he heard my pleas for help. I was in over my head, and my way of providing for my family was being taken.

Not only was this effectively going to put me out business, but several others and effectively would financially undermine Del Norte County as a whole to the tune of several million dollars a month throughout its five-month season. Supervisor Howard realized the importance of the issues and engaged.

During the process of this significant shutdown, Supervisor Howard began his role as an adviser. He advised me as to how to handle certain situations and procedures throughout the long drawn out process that the state agencies go through. He calmed me through not only my frustrations, but my desperations, and pushed me in the right directions when I wanted to quit.

After nearly a year long process everything came down to a final meeting. It was during this meeting that I saw Supervisor Howard for the asset that he truly is to this County. The Fish and Game Commission made a decision to close an area to fishing without any reason. No science based fact, no reason whatsoever, other than the fact that someone drew up the correct paperwork and it made it in front of the Commission. The statement that the Commission chair made was essentially, "let's close it and see what happens." At this point it was like watching a veteran versus an amateur.

Supervisor Howard kicked into action. I had spoken to several elected officials including senators, congressmen and State Assembly representatives. They all advised me that the decision had been made and that there wasn't anything we could do about it.

Well they underestimated Supervisor Howard. Within a year we had a complete compromise on the closure which suited both sides. The commission chair and three of its members had been removed, and the county had averted a serious loss and several small businesses saved!

Supervisor Howard did this all while still working a full-time job, and keeping up with the ever constant demands of his supervisor position. Above all of this, he maintained being a husband and a father.

This one issue is a drop in a very large bucket compared to what Supervisor Howard does for our county. His passion and care for our community is second to none. He carries the knowledge, tact and relationships that will get us through the tough times and doesn't require a pat on the back when we are in the good ones.

Howard is a huge advocate for our youth, for our outdoor activities, for our consumptive uses and our rights. He understands the needs of this county and will fight tooth-and-nail to secure even the smallest victories for us.

Supervisor Howard and I have not always agreed on issues. The political wheel turns slowly and we may not get the instant results that we want, but my trust is placed in Supervisor Howard.

Mike Coopman

Resident in District 3