



Board Agenda Item 69

DATE: December 17, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Grant Application and Revenue Agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively approve and authorize the Department of Public Works and Planning’s submittal of an online grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for FY 2023-2024 Wildfire Prevention Grant Program funds for the removal and disposal of hazard trees and ground fuels along roads and within unincorporated communities, in the amount of \$3,000,000;**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute a Revenue Agreement with CAL FIRE for FY 2023-2024 Wildfire Prevention Grant Program funds for the removal and disposal of hazard trees and ground fuels along roads and within communities, in the amount of \$3,000,000, effective upon execution through March 15, 2030; and**
- 3. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the Governing Body Resolution.**

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. Approval of the recommended actions would allow the Department of Public Works and Planning (Department) to receive FY 2023-2024 Wildfire Prevention Grant Program funds for the treatment of approximately 722 acres in roadside clearance, and the removal of dead or dying hazard trees that are within 300 feet of permanent private structures and infrastructures. This item pertains to locations in District 5.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board not approve the recommended actions, the County would not be eligible for funding. However, the Wildfire Prevention Grant Program is the only available grant funding source, at this time, that allows for removal and disposal of dead or dying trees along roads and on private property.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended revenue agreement represents a grant award in the amount of \$3,000,000. The competitive grant application does not require matching funds. The grant allows for full reimbursement of direct costs (\$2,678,571) but limits administrative cost recovery to 12% or \$321,429 of total direct costs. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Department’s Org 55125205 FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget and will be included in subsequent budget requests. Costs incurred by the Department are submitted to CAL FIRE for reimbursement.

DISCUSSION:

On January 10, 2024, the Department submitted an on-line grant application to CAL FIRE requesting a total of \$3,000,000 for the treatment of approximately 722 acres in roadside clearance (removal of standing dead or dying trees and ground fuels); the removal and disposal of dead or dying hazard trees that pose a threat to habitable structures and infrastructure; and the thinning of fuels and widening of 22 fire escape routes. Approximately 12,000 dead or dying hazard trees and 50,000 cubic yards of ground fuels have been identified for removal and disposal in the project area. The roads identified for roadside clearance are County maintained and are adjacent to private and U.S. Forest Service property. While the goal is to prevent a wildfire from igniting, the Department proposes to continue providing first responders with safe ingress and egress to a fire's perimeter to contain it as quickly as possible, should one ignite. Roadside clearance and removal of dead or dying trees within 300 feet of homes, roads, and infrastructure proved to be a beneficial tool to 2020 Creek Fire first responders. Roadside clearance also provided additional egress for safe evacuations and slowed the 2020 Creek Fire at several locations and allowed for additional time for resources to be staged.

In addition to the hazardous fuel reduction treatments, the revenue agreement includes a Wildfire Prevention Education component to educate property owners, and everyone who enjoys the forest, on ways to prevent a wildfire and increase survivability of a wildfire. Educational materials will be provided to the foothill and lower mountain vacation rental offices, campgrounds, and areas of interest, for tourists to minimize the risk of a wildfire. Staff and contracted Registered Professional Foresters will also educate the public on available services and treatments to protect their homes.

The third recommended action authorizes Department staff to execute and submit documents, in a limited fashion, as required by CAL FIRE to administer the agreement.

The County has utilized General Fund, State Responsibility Area, Local Assistance for Tree Mortality, Wildfire Prevention Grant Program, and California Disaster Assistance Act funding for the removal and disposal of dead or dying hazard trees since April 2016. To date, approximately 50,000 hazard trees and approximately 40,000 cubic yards of ground fuels has been removed and disposed along County and private roads, near homes and infrastructure.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - CAL FIRE Application/Agreement
On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino