



Board Agenda Item 23

DATE: May 12, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: John Zaroni, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator

SUBJECT: Retroactive Application/Agreement with Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration - Drug Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Retroactively authorize the Sheriff's previous submittal of a Drug Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program application to the U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration;**
2. **Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute retroactive Letter of Agreement, Certified Standard Assurances, and Certifications Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Assurances, effective October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026 (\$235,000);**
3. **Authorize the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator, or his designee, to act as the official representative of the County of Fresno, as required by the granting agency, to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as may be required pursuant to the Drug Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program; and**
4. **Approve and authorize the Clerk of the Board to execute Budget Transfer No. 62 transferring FY 2025-26 appropriations in the amount of \$11,000 from Account 6300 (Overtime) (\$10,218) and 6500 (OASDI Contribution) (\$782) to Account 8300 (Equipment), Program 92112, within the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 for the purchase of one drone.**

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The Sheriff's Office submitted the Drug Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program (DCESP) application on August 25, 2025, to meet the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) requirements, contingent on your Board's approval. The DEA of the United States DOJ has awarded funding to the County in the amount of \$235,000, for the period of October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026, to defray costs relating to the eradication and suppression of illicit cannabis. Approval of the fourth recommended action will authorize a budget transfer in the amount of \$11,000 to fund the purchase of a drone in support of these functions. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If your Board does not approve the recommended actions, the DCESP funds would be denied, which would impact the Sheriff's Office ability to eradicate and suppress illicit cannabis.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

On February 19, 2026, the Sheriff's Office was notified by the DEA of the DOJ of the award; The application and Letter of Agreement (LOA) are being brought to your Board on the first available Board date possible in

accordance with internal Department review, award notification, and agenda item review timelines. The funding period of the LOA began on October 1, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The Sheriff's Office was allocated \$235,000 through September 30, 2026. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget for Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator Org 3111 for this program. There is no match requirement for receipt of the funds. Monies will be used to fund operational costs, as well as Deputy overtime while Deputies are directly engaged in the illicit cannabis eradication process. Approval of the fourth recommended action will transfer existing FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget appropriations from the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 Account 6300 and 6500 to the Department's Equipment account 8300 in the amount of \$11,000 for the purchase of one drone. Operating and maintenance costs for the drone are included in the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget and will be incorporated into future Recommended Budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

The County has received funding through this program since 2006 to fund Deputy overtime and other direct costs relating to the eradication and suppression of illicit cannabis plants. On February 25, 2025, your Board approved the Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration - Drug Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program Application/Agreement in the amount of \$250,000 effective from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. On August 1, 2025, the DEA of the DOJ forwarded the current year application to the Sheriff's Office to apply for funding to investigate, locate and eradicate illicit cannabis plants. The application was submitted on August 29, 2025, to meet the application deadline, contingent on your Board's approval. On February 19, 2026, the Sheriff's Office was notified the application is approved in the amount of \$235,000 for the period of October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026.

The County's FY 2026 DCESP funding of \$235,000 will allow the Sheriff's Office to continue to combat the illegal cultivation and trafficking of marijuana on private, public, agricultural, and forest land, and continue its efforts to investigate growers who use the medical marijuana laws as a guise to grow marijuana for profit in Fresno County. Monies will be used to fund operational costs, as well as Deputy overtime while Deputies are directly engaged in the illicit cannabis eradication process.

These grant funds may not be used for: (i) issuing licenses, permits, or other forms of authorization permitting the holder to manufacture, distribute, sell, or use marijuana in contravention of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA); (ii) conducting ancillary activities related to the issuance of such licenses and permits, such as background checks on applicants; (iii) collecting state or local tax or licensing revenue related to the manufacture, distribution, or sale of marijuana in contravention of the CSA; (iv) preparing or issuing regulations governing the manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of marijuana in contravention of the CSA; (v) monitoring compliance with state or local laws or regulations that permit the manufacture, distribution, sale, or use marijuana in contravention of the CSA; or (vi) the purchase of evidence and the purchase of information.

The LOA contains indemnification language that is not the County's standard indemnification language. The LOA also requires the County to take responsibility for all liability resulting from the County's activities related to the LOA. The LOA has been reviewed by Risk Management and the Sheriff believes that the benefits of the recommended agreement outweigh any potential risks and recommends approval of the agreement.

The LOA requires that the County attest to certifications including a Lobbying certification, a Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters certification, Certified Standard Assurances and a Drug-Free Workplace certification.

The Certified Standard Assurances certify that the individual signing is authorized to apply for these funds on behalf of the County, that it has legal authority to apply for and receive Federal funds, and that it will comply with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and award requirements associated with the program, that the County will give the grantor access to all records related to the award, that the County is a governmental entity, and acknowledges the penalties associated with making false statements in the certifications. The Assurances further require compliance with a number of Federal requirements and laws, including, but not limited to, limitations on certain political activities of employees, compliance with Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970, compliance with the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, and compliance with nondiscrimination requirements of specified Federal laws.

Approval of the third recommended action authorizes the Sheriff, or his designee, to act as the County's official representative in connection with the application and award, and to provide any additional information required by the granting agency. This authority is limited in scope and does not extend to substantive changes to the LOA, certifications, or assurances approved by your Board.

The fourth recommended action will approve a budget transfer and establish a fixed asset account for the purchase of one drone. The recommended action will establish capital asset appropriations to appropriately categorize the purchase of equipment. The Sheriff's office will work with Purchasing to procure the drone. Costs to purchase the drone will be transferred from the overtime/OASDI accounts within grant Org. 31116311; this amount will reduce the cap of what can be reimbursed through third-party funding for overtime utilized in cannabis eradication activities but will not be exceeded. The drone will be used to conduct aerial surveillance of illicit cannabis grows, assist in locating remote or concealed cultivation sites, and support aerial operations in areas that are difficult to access by ground. This capability will improve operational efficiency and provide real-time situational awareness during enforcement activities.

The use of the drone will also enhance officer safety during search warrant service and field operations, particularly in rural or isolated locations where staffing resources may be limited. In situations where subjects are non-compliant or refuse to exit structures, the drone will provide deputies with real-time visibility to assess conditions, identify potential threats, and make informed tactical decisions prior to engagement.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #22, February 25, 2025

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - LOA with United States DOJ DEA

On file with Clerk - Budget Transfer 62

CAO ANALYST:

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