



Board Agenda Item 60

DATE: December 14, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: David Luchini, RN, PHN, Director, Department of Public Health
Steven E. White, Director, Department of Public Works and Planning

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute a revenue Agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, for 2020-2021 Fire Prevention Grant Program funds to create two fuel breaks along Auberry Road and Peterson Road in Eastern Fresno County, effective upon execution through March 15, 2025 (\$4,074,000).**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the Governing Body Resolution, Nondiscrimination Compliance Statement, and Drug Free Workplace Certification.**

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. Approval of the recommended actions would allow the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Public Works and Planning (PWP) to receive California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Prevention Grant Program funds. The grant will fund the establishment of two fuel breaks that will create a gap in fuel continuity during a fire, while providing road access to ingress and egress for first responders and the public, with no increase in Net County Cost. 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 to construct two new shaded fuel breaks, which would reduce potential wildfire hazards.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended revenue agreement represents a grant award in the amount of \$4,074,000. The competitive grant allocation does not require matching funds; however, DPH proposes to utilize \$109,300 in Health Realignment to offset Department staff costs associated with grant administration, contract coordination, and project oversight. This brings the total cost to \$4,183,300. The grant allows for full reimbursement of direct costs (\$3,637,500) but limits administrative cost recovery to 12% or \$436,500 of total direct costs. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in PWP's Org 5512 FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget and will be included in subsequent budget requests.

DISCUSSION:

On April 27, 2021, the Director of DPH submitted an application to CAL FIRE requesting a total of \$4,074,000 for the construction of two shaded fuel breaks along Auberry and Peterson roads. One fuel

break will be 263 acres and the other will be 234 acres. The 263 acre, 5.4 mile long Auberry Road shaded fuel break will be constructed east of the community of Auberry and directly north of the Meadow Lakes and Bald Mountain communities. The 234 acre, 4.8 mile long Peterson Road shaded fuel break will be constructed east of the Shaver Springs community and south of the Cressman community. Both fuel breaks will protect the community of Shaver Lake.

Fuel modification projects, such as shaded fuel breaks, are designed to reduce the risk of fire by removing and separating fuels. This removal reduces the amount of combustible material available so that when a fire approaches, it will decrease in intensity, cool down, and drop from the canopy to the ground. Fuel breaks are an integral tool in preventing the uncontrolled spread of fires and their effectiveness is well documented.

There are an estimated 3,780 dead or dying trees within the two 400 foot-wide shaded fuel breaks. The objective of the fuel breaks will be to establish a break in fuel structure measuring 200 feet on each side of the road, measured from road centerline, that will maintain natural habitat, ecological elements, and healthy trees while providing a strategic location for suppressing an approaching wildfire. Areas within the fuel breaks with no remaining live conifers will be re-planted with conifers to provide shade in an effort to slowdown brush growth. Ultimately, the shade provided within the fuel break will minimize the frequency at which maintenance needs to occur. The fuel breaks will provide a strategic location for fire suppression personnel to combat a wildfire and for aerial retardant to be applied. The fuel breaks will also allow for the staging of engines and equipment. In addition, the project will expand the defensible space for property owners that live adjacent to the fuel breaks.

The County has utilized General Fund, State Responsibility Area, Local Assistance for Tree Mortality, Fire Prevention Grant Program, and California Disaster Assistance Act funding for the removal and disposal of dead and dying trees since April 2016. Approximately 30,000 trees and 20,000 cubic yards of ground fuel has been removed and disposed along County and private roads, near homes, and infrastructure.

On August 9, 2016, your Board authorized the Purchasing Manager to establish Master Service Agreements for Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and Licensed Timber Operators (LTO) to expedite the removal and disposal of dead and dying trees. The Departments propose to continue utilizing the RPFs to assess, identify, and mark dead and dying trees for removal within the fuel breaks. The RPFs will also assist in writing the scope of work, which will include the retention, and spacing of seedlings, thinning of dense tree stands, removal of ladder fuels, treating brush, and protection of cultural and biological resources. Experienced LTOs will construct the fuel breaks and dispose of trees and ground fuels in the most economical manner.

The recommended agreement is effective upon execution through March 15, 2025. The budget line items within the recommended agreement may be modified up to 10% without exceeding the annual maximums. The agreement may be suspended or terminated by the State if the County fails to comply with the terms. The County may terminate the agreement upon providing a 30-day written notice.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #31, August 9, 2016

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Agreement with CAL FIRE - #5GA20111
On file with Clerk - CAL FIRE Governing Body Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander