



Board Agenda Item 38

DATE: February 4, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: David Pomaville, Director
Department of Public Health

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

SUBJECT: Retroactive Application for Fire Prevention Grant Program Funds

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Retroactively authorize the Department of Public Health's previous submittal of a grant application in the amount of \$2,565,920 to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, for FY 2019-20 Fire Prevention Grant Program funds to remove and dispose of dead and dying trees within the mountain communities in Eastern Fresno County.

On December 2, 2019, the Director of the Department of Public Health submitted a competitive grant application for California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) grant funds, contingent upon your Board's approval. The grant provides funding for removal of dead and dying trees that are within 300 feet of permanent private structures, roadways, and public or private infrastructure, with no increase in Net County Cost. Applicants that are selected for funding will be notified in March 2020 and have a grant deadline of March 15, 2024. This item pertains to locations in District 5.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board not approve the recommended action, the grant application will be rescinded and the County would not be allowed to compete. However, the Fire Prevention Grant Program is the only available grant funding source at this time that allows for removal and disposal of dead and dying trees on private property.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The recommended action represents one application in the amount of \$2,565,920. The grant application is competitive and does not require matching funds; however, the Department of Public Health (DPH) proposes to utilize \$108,300 in Health Realignment to offset staff costs associated with grant administration, contract coordination, and project oversight. The grant allows for full reimbursement of direct costs (\$2,291,000) but limits administrative cost recovery to 12% or \$274,920 of total direct costs. Should the County's application be approved, the Departments will return to your Board to execute the necessary agreement and increase the appropriations and estimated revenues.

DISCUSSION:

On December 2, 2019, DPH submitted an application to CAL FIRE requesting a total of \$2,565,920 for the removal and disposal of dead and dying trees that are within 300 feet of permanent private structures, roadways, and public or private infrastructure, and ground fuels removal. In addition, the Department requested funding to add a position as the County currently lacks personnel with the technical expertise to educate private landowners on how to manage their lands, be a liaison to the U.S. Forest Service, CalFIRE, PG&E, Southern California Edison, Resource Conservation Districts, Bureau of Land Management, Fire Safe Councils, and other local agencies as it pertains to promoting good forest management.

The application covers the communities of Auberry, Meadow Lakes, Shaver Springs, Tollhouse, Pine Ridge, Shaver Lake, Cressmans, Bretz Mountain Village, Quartz Mountain, Wildflower Village, Millwood, Pinehurst, Etheda Springs, Cedarbrook, Dunlap, Miramonte, Deer Crossing and Squaw Valley in Eastern Fresno County.

Approximately 3,500 dead and dying trees and 125,000 cubic yards of ground fuels cleanup material has been identified for removal around 4,600 homes and along 20 roads. The County has also identified 4 miles of fire escape routes within communities that have not been treated in years. These projects will provide these communities with a reduced risk of hazard trees impacting habitable structures, safer ingress and egress routes along local roads, safer community egress on fire escape routes, and less fuel loads within communities. The Departments propose to continue contracting for the assessment, identification, removal, and disposal of dead and dying trees and ground fuels cleanup projects within high hazard communities.

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 25,500 trees and 13,000 cubic yards of ground fuel has been removed and disposed along County and private roads, near homes, and infrastructure.

The County has been in a proclaimed state of emergency since September 22, 2015. In January 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the U.S. Forest Service had identified an additional 18 million dead trees state-wide since its last aerial survey in December 2017. The increase brings the total number of dead and dying trees since 2010 to over 147 million on 9.7 million acres of Federal, State, and private lands. Approximately 25,000 dead and dying trees have been identified for removal in the high hazard zones adjacent to structures in and around communities in the County. However, available funds will only help address a portion of trees in need of removal.

Successful grant applicants will be notified in March 2020. Should the County be an award recipient, the Departments will return to your Board to request your Board's approval of a revenue agreement by the CAL FIRE's deadline of August 31, 2020.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #21, January 7, 2020
BAI #45, August 6, 2019
BAI #21, September 22, 2015

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Fire Prevention Grant Program Application

CAO ANALYST:

Raul Guerra