



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** Fire  
**Department No.:** 031  
**Agenda Date:** October 14, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden  
Contact: Fred Tan, Fire Marshal  
**SUBJECT:** **Grant Agreement #5GA25100 between the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** Risk Management

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution (Attachment A) approving Grant Agreement (Agreement) 5GA25100 (Attachment 1 to the Resolution) with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for the acceptance of \$2,617,280 in grant funds to implement a fuel reduction project designated by the Santa Barbara County Unit Strategic Fire Plan and Agreement from the grant approval date (October 14, 2025) through February 15, 2028; and
- b) Approve and authorize the Fire Chief, or designee, subject to the Board's ability to rescind this delegated authority at any time to:
  - i) Conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to, agreements, amendments, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project; and
- c) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the action is a creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment.

The Agreement requires a copy of the CEQA document must be approved by and provided to the State before any grant funds are made available for any Project activity that could directly impact the environment.

### **Summary Text:**

The Agreement allows the Santa Barbara County Fire Department to deploy \$2,617,280 in State grant funding to execute the "Tepusquet VMP Phase II Project."

The project, which involves a variety of treatments, proposes approximately 2,424 acres of combined treatments to reduce the impacts of wildfires to this area by mitigating fuel continuity, providing improved safe separation distance for firefighters, providing opportunities for access to keep fires smaller, and improving egress along transportation corridors, thereby reducing the release of carbon into the environment.

This project is consistent with both the California Strategic Fire Plan and Santa Barbara County Unit Strategic Fire Plan. The project supports the goals and objectives of the Santa Barbara County Vegetation Management Program.

### **Discussion:**

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) was provided a narrow timeline to apply for and sign an agreement to secure unused and reallocated funding for the Tepusquet VMP Phase II Project. The Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) plans to begin implementation of the Tepusquet Vegetation Management Project (VMP) in early Spring 2026. The availability of funding ensures that SBCFD can dedicate the necessary resources to safely implement and conduct various fuel reduction treatments and prescribed fire operations, while maintaining staffing levels at fire stations during the multi-day, technical project.

Initially funded at \$6,440,879 through a CAL FIRE California Climate Investment (CCI) Fire Prevention Program Grant in 2021, SBCFD worked with CAL FIRE to advance projects in Tepusquet Canyon for this Phase II project. The original project resulted in substantial roadside fuel reduction, prescribed fire, herbivory, community defensible space and fuel break construction across 42,000 acres of high-risk wildland. At the close of the original performance period, a balance of \$2,617,280 remained unspent. CAL FIRE subsequently approved the reallocation of these funds, which SBCFD will use to maintain and enhance previously completed treatments, improve upon roadside fuel reduction treatments, and implement up to 2,000 additional acres of prescribed fire.

Approval of the attached resolution and Agreement with CAL FIRE will allow SBCFD to continue advancing critical fuel reduction and fire prevention work as designated in the Santa Barbara County Unit Strategic Fire Plan.

### **Background:**

In May 2021, SBCFD submitted a CAL FIRE CCI Fire Prevention Program Grant Application requesting funding to support the "Tepusquet VMP," a multi-faceted fuel reduction project in Tepusquet Canyon and adjacent areas.

This multi-year project encompassed at least 42,130 acres in an area of Santa Barbara County with a documented history of large wildland fires. Completed treatments included roadside fuel reduction along Tepusquet Rd., Colson Canyon Rd., Ruiz Canyon Rd., Blazing Saddle Dr., Autumn Rd., and several unnamed private access roads; a 500-acre prescribed fire project; herbivory treatments; strategic fuel break treatments; implementation of a community chipping program; and the creation of community defensible space zones (CDSP) in residential clusters within the project area. These treatments provide strategic locations for firefighter access, safety zones, and staging areas, while also improving community egress.

The original Tepusquet VMP and Phase II projects are designed to protect communities, reduce ignition potential, and limit the size and intensity of wildland fires in older fuel beds. By reducing the severity of future fire events, the project also directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions. SBCFD was awarded funding of \$6,440,879 for this original Phase I effort.

While the majority of funds were expended during the original grant performance period (December 14, 2021 – March 15, 2025), a balance of \$2,617,280 remained unspent. On September 26, 2025, CAL FIRE and the State Legislature approved the reallocation of this balance to continue advancing the Tepusquet VMP through the Phase II project. The new performance period will run from October 14, 2025 through February 15, 2028. Reallocated funds will be used to maintain and improve previously completed project work, enhance roadside fuel reduction treatments, and implement up to an additional 2,000 acres of prescribed fire.

**Performance Measure:**

None for the County and SBCFD. As weather conditions and personnel availability can be variable throughout the year, SBCFD is only required to document accomplishments and spending through the State's software applications eCivis and CALMapper until the funding is expended.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

**Budgeted:** No, however, there is sufficient appropriation to cover the salaries and therefore no budget revision request is required.

The CAL FIRE CCI Fire Prevention Program Grant will cover 100% of grant-eligible direct costs and also fund a 12% administrative rate, which will be applied to all direct costs. The SBCFD Fire and Fuels Crews, Construction Section, and Prevention staff will be the main workforce for maintenance projects listed in the Agreement. As a result, startup costs, including chainsaws, weed whips, blowers, hand tools, vehicles, and uniforms, have been incurred through the regular budgeting process, and no additional startup costs are anticipated. Overtime for personnel will be utilized and funded by this grant for the prescribed fire implementation, which will leave fire stations staffed during this activity, projected to occur in the Spring of 2026.

First year FY 25/26 grant expenditures are estimated at approximately \$150,000. This includes salaries and benefits. The remaining balance of \$2,467,280 will be budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026-27; any unspent funds will be carried over into Fiscal Year 2027-28, which is part of the performance period.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY 25/26</b>	<b>FY 26/27</b>	<b>Total</b>
General Fund			
State	\$150,000	\$2,467,280	<b>\$2,617,280.80</b>
Federal			
Fees			
[Other Source]			
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$2,467,280</b>	<b>\$2,617,280.802</b>

**Staffing Impacts:**

No additional staffing is required for this grant project. All existing SBCFD personnel, FTEs and Extra-Help are sufficient to implement this project.

**Special Instructions:**

Upon Board approval and execution, the Clerk is asked to please return a copy of the minute order and duplicate original Grant Resolution attention: Frederick Tan.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** - Grant Resolution Tepusquet VMP Phase II Project

**Contact Information:**

Fred Tan  
Division Chief  
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