



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: September 9, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden *MH*
Contact: Fred Tan, Fire Marshal
SUBJECT: Grant Agreement #5GG23245 between the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department

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) ratifying Grant Agreement 5GG23245 (Attachment 1 to the Resolution) with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for the acceptance of \$999,000.00 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 (6/24/2025) through March 15, 2029; 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) Approve Budget Revision Request #BJE-0010801 (Attachment B); and
- d) 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 \$999,000.00 in State grant funding to execute the “Santa Barbara Vegetation Management Program and Ignition Prevention Project.”

The project, which involves a variety of treatments, proposes 3,114 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 \$999,000.00 for approved SBCFD Unit Fire Plan projects from CAL FIRE California Climate Investment funds. Due to the abbreviated timeline and the uncertainty of whether the funds would be allocated to SBCFD, SBCFD did not have an opportunity to bring the Agreement before the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for approval. CAL FIRE staff sent the unsigned agreement to SBCFD on June 19, 2025 and required the Fire Chief’s signature by the end of the day on June 23, 2025.

SBCFD requests that the Board retroactively approve the Agreement between SBCFD and CAL FIRE to fund the projects outlined within the grant application. The “SBC Fire VMP and Ignition Prevention Project” (Project) is multi-year project which potentially benefits up to 64,000 homes in areas of Santa Barbara County which have an extensive history of wildland fires. The planned treatments include up to two prescribed fire projects, totaling 2,927 acres and up to 16.27 miles of fuel reduction activities. The priority treatment within the proposed Project is the Sedgwick Preserve VMP, an 1,819-acre prescribed fire project, which is an essential element of a network of prescribed fire and fuel treatment projects covering the Lompoc and Santa Ynez Valleys.

SBCFD is targeting implementation of the Sedgwick Preserve VMP in late fall of 2025. The funding allows SBCFD to ensure appropriate resources are assigned to implement and hold the prescribed firing operations, while enabling SBCFD to keep fire stations staffed during the multi-day, technical project.

With any available remaining funds, the Project funding would allow SBCFD to assist the United States Forest Service (USFS) with projects in the mountainous communities. This is an essential

element of the proposed Project as the USFS struggled the last several years to secure funding to implement and/or complete projects in the County.

The multi-faceted fuel reduction Project will create reduced fuel zones to provide firefighters the opportunity to prevent large fire growth, strategic locations to provide firefighters essential access, safety zones and staging areas; and improves community egress.

Background:

As a Contract County, SBCFD regularly communicates with CAL FIRE on a variety of topics. SBCFD's Prevention Division has successfully applied for five (5) CAL FIRE California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants for large scale projects and equipment purchases. SBCFD Prevention regularly seeks and requests additional funding from CAL FIRE to support local fuel reduction projects.

Due to SBCFD's history of successful grant implementation, CAL FIRE identified available funds and offered SBCFD the opportunity to apply for the available funding through an expedited grant application process to encumber the \$999,000.00 of funding. CAL FIRE contacted SBCFD in early April of 2025 and SBCFD submitted a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) California Climate Investment (CCI) Fire Prevention Grant Application in mid-April of 2025 to support the "SBC Fire VMP and Ignition Prevention Project," a multi-faceted fuel reduction project throughout the County of Santa Barbara.

SBCFD was notified the application was successful and sent an unsigned Agreement on June 19, 2025. Due to State fiscal year requirements, CAL FIRE required the Agreement to be signed by the Fire Chief by June 23, 2025. After discussions with the Fire Chief, Fire personnel, and County Counsel, SBCFD signed the Agreement and returned it to CAL FIRE to execute and encumber the \$999,000.00 in grant funds.

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, Fire Department is requesting approval of Budget Revision_0010801 to capture the programmatic revenue and expenditures associated with this grant award.

The CAL FIRE California Climate Investment (CCI) Fire Prevention Program Grant will fund 100% of grant eligible direct costs and will also fund a 12% administrative rate that will be applied to all direct costs with the exception of capital equipment 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, start-up costs including chainsaws, weed whips, blowers, hand tools, vehicles, uniforms, etc. have been incurred through the regular budgeting process and limited 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 fall of 2025.

First year FY 25/26 grant expenditures are estimated at approximately \$999,000. This includes salaries and benefits, services, supplies, maintenance and an estimated \$30,000 for the purchase of three traffic control trailers.

Ongoing trailer maintenance is expected to be minimal. Fire allocates ongoing maintenance as part of the budget for equipment. The only anticipated needs over the next five years are new tires and a replacement battery.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 25/26	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	Total
General Fund				
State	\$999,000			\$999,000
Federal				
Fees				
[Other Source]				
Total	\$999,000			\$999,000

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 Santa Barbara VMP and Ignition Prevention Project

Attachment B - Budget Revision Request #BJE-0010801

Contact Information:

Fred Tan
Division Chief
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