



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

Department Name: Public Health
Department No.: 041
For Agenda Of: June 27, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mouhanad Hammami, Director
Director(s) Public Health Department
Contact Info: Lars Seifert, Director
Environmental Health Services (805) 681-4934
SUBJECT: Resolution Authorizing Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant Application
and Agreement with the State Department of Water Resources

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution to:
- i. Approve and authorize the Director of the Public Health Department, or Designee, to submit a County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant application to the State Department of Water Resources for financial assistance in an amount not to exceed \$125,000 for the period January 1, 2024 through December 30, 2025 (Fiscal Years 2023-2024 through 2025-2026);
 - ii. Approve and authorize the Director of the Public Health Department, or Designee, to execute a grant agreement with the State Department of Water Resources' County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Program to accept an award of said grant funds, upon review and approval by the Auditor-Controller's Office, County Counsel's Office, and Risk Management;
 - iii. Approve and authorize the Public Health Director, or Designee, to execute any future amendments to the grant agreement with the State Department of Water Resources' County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Program so long as the amount does not exceed \$125,000 cumulatively and there are no significant changes in the program, upon review and approval by the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel's Office; and

- iv. Approve and authorize the Public Health Director, or Designee, to make and sign all required certifications and to submit any required documents, invoices, and reports required to obtain grant funding; and
- b) Determine that these activities are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review per CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b)(3), since it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activities may have a significant effect on the environment; and CEQA Guideline Sections 15306, 15307, and 15308, because these actions are for information collection and for the protection of natural resources and the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to authorize the Public Health Department, Environmental Health Services to apply for and receive drought planning grant assistance funds from the State Department of Water Resources (DWR). This financial assistance (not to exceed \$125,000) is being offered by DWR through a non-competitive drought relief planning grant program to reimburse eligible expenses to prepare a County Drought Resilience Plan for small water suppliers and domestic wells in the county that may be vulnerable to future drought and water shortages as required by Senate Bill (SB) 552 of 2021.

Background:

With recent rainfall events, Santa Barbara County is no longer listed as having impacts on the US Drought Monitor. However, as of June 14, 2023, the California State Drought Emergency remains in effect. On July 8, 2021, the Governor of California added Santa Barbara County to the list of counties experiencing a drought and subject to his emergency declarations issued on April 21, 2021 and May 10, 2021.

On September 23, 2021, State legislation signed by the Governor of California, Senate Bill 552, found that there are currently varying levels of water contingency planning and coverage across counties for small water suppliers, potentially leaving people at risk of going without water to meet basic household and drinking water needs during the next drought. As part of this legislation, SB 552 (in Section 10609.70 of the California Water Code) requires all counties to take specific measures to improve drought and water shortage preparedness for small water system suppliers and domestic wells, including the preparation of a drought resilience plan specific to an individual county.

While no deadline has been established to prepare or implement such a drought resilience plan, the Department of Water Resources has established a County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant Program as of March 2023 (Attachment A), where counties can request up to \$125,000 in financial assistance or direct technical assistance prior to December 29, 2023 to support their planning efforts on a first-come, first-served basis.

As requested today by Resolution (Attachment B), the Public Health Department, Environmental Health Services, is seeking Board authorization to apply for, and execute, a Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant to fund the preparation of a County Drought Resilience Plan for small water suppliers and domestic wells in the county that may be vulnerable to future drought and water shortages, and to determine these activities are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review (Attachment C).

The County Drought Resilience Plan would include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- An assessment of drought and water shortage risk areas within the county;
- Identification of feasible water system consolidation opportunities for identified vulnerable or at-risk water systems and domestic wells, and associated cost estimates;
- A description of domestic well drinking water mitigation program or policy options for drought resiliency;
- An assessment of short-term emergency and interim drinking water response needs;
- An analysis of the long-term mitigation strategy and action steps necessary to implement plan recommendations; and
- An analysis of local, state, and federal funding sources available to implement the plan.

Moreover, a cross-walk of potential alignment opportunities with other countywide climate adaptation, drought response, or hazard mitigation plans will be conducted, and community input will be considered from applicable Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and interested stakeholders in the development of the County Drought Resilience Plan.

The County has also established an ongoing drought task force to manage the County's drought response, share information, and develop emergency preparedness plans for significant drought-related water outages. The task force includes County staff from the Office of Emergency Management, the County Water Agency, Public Works Department, and Environmental Health Services. The task force will continue to meet routinely to identify how to support the County's ongoing compliance with State emergency drought measures and preparedness planning.

Any findings, strategies, or policy recommendations identified in the County Drought Resilience Plan to mitigate or respond to current or future drought conditions in Santa Barbara County would be brought to this Board for further direction prior to implementation.

Fiscal Analysis:

Adopting a resolution authorizing the Public Health Director to apply for the Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant will have no fiscal impact. Upon award of the grant, the department will return to your Board with a Budget Revision. The grant does not require cost sharing or matching local funds.

Staffing Impacts:

There will be no increase or decrease in staff as a result of adopting the resolution authorizing a grant funding application for planning assistance. The County Drought Resilience Plan will be prepared under a professional services agreement with a qualified consultant.

Special Instructions:

Request the Clerk of the Board to email one copy of the original adopted resolution and one Minute Order to the Public Health Department, Attention: PHDGROUPContractsUnit@sbcphd.org.

Attachments:

- A. State Drought Resilience Planning Grant Assistance Program Application Instructions 2023
- B. Authorizing Resolution for Drought Resilience Planning Grant
- C. Notice of CEQA Exemption

Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Grant

Agenda Date: June 27, 2023

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Authored by:

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cc:

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