



**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: County Executive Office
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: April 19, 2022
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Director(s):
Contact Info: Nancy Anderson, Assistant County Executive Officer *NA*

DocuSigned by:

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SUBJECT: State General Fund Allocation from the California Natural Resources Agency,
Fiscal Year 2021-22 for the Foothills Forever Project

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- A) Approve and adopt the attached Resolution authorizing the County Executive Officer or designee to submit a Project Information Package for acceptance of a State General Fund appropriation included in the Budget Act of 2021, in the amount of \$3,000,000 for the Foothills Forever Project, to be allocated by the California Natural Resources Agency;
- B) Authorize the County Executive Officer or designee, to execute all certifications, standard forms, and other documents required to complete the Project Information Package, and to execute a grant agreement for the project with the California Natural Resources Agency in a form substantially similar to that included in the Project Information Package, subject to concurrence by Auditor-Controller, County Counsel and Risk Management; and
- C) Determine that the above actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because pursuant to sections 15378(b)(4) and 15378(b)(5) the recommended actions consist of organization, administrative, or fiscal activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary:

As part of the 2021 State of California Budget, the State approved a \$3 million appropriation to the County of Santa Barbara for the Foothills Forever Project (Sec. 19.56. Item 143 of the 2021 State Budget). The California Natural Resources Agency (“CNRA”) has been delegated the responsibility for allocating the funds and determining the best method for allocation to ensure the funds are used for the purposes specified in the Budget Act. CNRA procedures require the County to certify by resolution the approval of the Project Information Package prior to submission to the State, and to designate a County official with authority to execute a project agreement with CNRA.

Discussion:

In 2005, the County approved residential development on the 101-acre San Marcos Foothills West Mesa Properties, located at the terminus of Via Gaitero Road, in Santa Barbara County. The Foothills Forever project is a nonprofit campaign to acquire the West Mesa Properties, extinguish the existing development rights, and preserve the property as public open space in perpetuity.

Through the Foothills Forever campaign, Channel Islands Restoration, Inc. (“CIR”) and conservation partner, Allemall Foundation, LLC have successfully acquired title to the West Mesa Properties, subject to two remaining loans totaling \$4.45 million. The \$3 million in State funding would be used to pay down the existing loans. Under the proposed project description for the CNRA allocation located in Attachment B, the property currently encumbered by the loans would ultimately be transferred to the County to be preserved as public open space in perpetuity.

In addition to the \$3 million State funding, a part of the FY 2021-22 adopted budget, the Board approved a \$2 million allocation for the potential purchase of real property interests in the area of the San Marcos Preserve. With Board approval, County staff would pursue acquisition of the properties consistent with the proposed project description and requirements of the CNRA allocation. Acceptance of any interest in the West Mesa Properties would be subject to subsequent Board review and approval.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

If the project information package is accepted by the California Natural Resources Agency, a grant agreement will be given to the County at that time. Additionally, any required budget revision will be submitted to your Board for approval at that time as well. Staff recommends authorizing the County Executive Officer, or designee to execute the grant agreement and future amendments if needed, subject to concurrence from Risk Management, County Counsel, and Auditor/Controller.

Fiscal Analysis:

State general funds have been allocated to Santa Barbara County for the Foothills Forever Project in the 2021 California State Budget in the amount of \$3 million.

This Board letter seeks authorization to submit a project information package to accept the general fund allocation in the amount of \$3 million and authorize the County Executive Officer, or designee to later execute a grant agreement with the California Natural Resources Agency, accepting the funding amount of \$3 million.

Special Instructions:

Please return one electronic copy of the signed resolution to Jasmine McGinty at jmcginty@countyofsb.org, ext. 3108.

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Attachments:

Attachment A – Resolution

Attachment B – Project Information Package

Authored by:

Jasmine McGinty, Principal Analyst, County Executive Office