



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: Fire
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: June 28, 2022
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief / Fire Warden, 805-681-5500
Director(s)
Contact Info: Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief, 805-681-5501
SUBJECT: Grant Agreement #5GA21202 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) Approve the attached Resolution (Attachment A) authorizing the Fire Chief or designee to approve and execute an Agreement (Attachment 1 to the Resolution) with the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for the acceptance of \$1,225,000.00 of grant funds to implement fuel reduction projects designated by the Santa Barbara County Unit Strategic Fire Plan from the grant approval date through March 15, 2026 and 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;
- b) 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 documentation of CEQA compliance 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 use \$1,225,000.00 in State grant funding to execute the Santa Barbara County Fire Plan and Vegetation Management Program (VMP) project.

The project proposes 3,745 acres of treatments to reduce the impacts of wildfires and reduce the release of carbon into the atmosphere 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. The project specifically proposes to complete two prescribed fire projects and implement 46.17 miles of roadside fuel reduction.

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

Background:

In March 2022, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department submitted a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) California Climate Investment (CCI) Direct Award Grant Application requesting grant funding to support the “Santa Barbara County Fire Plan and VMP” project, a multi-faceted fuel reduction project throughout the County of Santa Barbara.

This multi-year project benefits at least 64,000 homes in areas of Santa Barbara County that have an extensive history of large wildland fires. The planned treatments include 46.17 miles of roadside fuel reduction in the Santa Barbara front country and Santa Ynez Valley, in addition to 3,331 acres of prescribed fire in the Santa Ynez Valley. These fuel treatments will create strategic locations to provide firefighter access, safety zones and staging areas, while improving community egress.

The planned fuel and roadside treatments are intended to protect communities, reduce the number of ignitions, and limit the size and intensity of fire occurrences. The project directly limits overall greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the size and intensity of future wildland fires.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department, along with the five (5) other CAL FIRE Contract Counties, has been selected to receive state grants. The grant to Santa Barbara County extends through March 15, 2026 in an amount not to exceed \$1,225,000.00.

Project Implementation Plan:

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBC) will manage this project and use its Fire Crew, Construction Section, GIS Section, Fuels Crew, contractors, and possibly outside agency crews (e.g. California Conservation Corps, CAL FIRE, Ventura County Fire) to complete the 3,745 acres of fuel reduction. Work will begin with the 46.17 miles of roadside fuel treatments, which will result in 414 acres of overall fuel reduction under existing CEQA Notices of Exemption (NOEs). When weather conditions allow for prescribed fire activities, SBC will implement the final phase of the Spaulding-Midland VMP, a 1,512-prescribed fire project in the Santa Ynez Valley, with the resources mentioned above and SBC Fire Engines and Engine Company personnel. A contracted consultant will develop a project-specific CEQA document, relying in part on the VMP Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), for the Sedgwick VMP, a 1,819 acre prescribed fire project in the Santa Ynez Valley.

Although the grant period of performance ends on March 15, 2026, the Fire Department intends to complete the grant work by the end of FY 22/23.

CEQA Compliance:

The grant requires compliance with CEQA and all other local, state, and federal environmental laws. CEQA compliance must be completed within one (1) year from the start date of the Agreement. All project activities proposed as part of the SBC Fire Plan and VMP project will rely on a combination of CEQA documents, including Notices of Exemption (NOEs), an existing VMP PEIR for the Midland-Spaulding VMP, and a project-specific CEQA document for the Sedgewick VMP. Existing NOEs for applicable projects may be updated as needed and submitted to the state for review and posting. Additionally, with 3,745 acres identified for treatment within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), CAL FIRE will oversee CEQA compliance utilizing the established VMP PEIR process.

Copies of completed CEQA documents must be provided to the State before any grant funds are made available for any project activity that could directly impact the environment (e.g. cutting, piling or burning bush, masticating, dozer work, etc.).

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The CAL FIRE Direct Grant will fund 100% of grant eligible direct costs and a 12% administrative rate applied to all direct costs with the exception of capital equipment costs. The funding, equipment and supplies requested through the grant will be utilized throughout Santa Barbara County to maintain, improve and complete ongoing fuel reduction and planned prescribed fire projects as outlined in the Santa Barbara County Unit Fire Plan.

FY 22/23 grant expenditures include salaries and benefits, services, supplies and an estimated \$166,000 for the purchase of a track-chipper. A budget revision will be processed in FY 22/23 to incorporate the necessary appropriations. There are no facilities impacts.

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State	\$ 1,225,000.00		\$ 1,225,000.00
Federal			
Fees			
Other: Fire District			
Total	\$ 1,225,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,225,000.00

Narrative:

Total state funding for this multi-year grant is \$1,225,000.00. Minimal ancillary Fire Department costs may be incurred as the grant work progresses.

Staffing Impacts:

The SBC Fire Crew will engage in these grant projects with minimal impacts to current staffing. Additionally, the County Fire Department created a dedicated Fuels Crew in 2019 to support grant projects and this crew will assist with the SBC Fire Plan and VMP Project as needed. Construction, Prevention and Station Operations personnel will also be deployed to support various portions of the grant activities.

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 to the Fire Department, attention: Frederick Tan. Once the State has executed the grant agreement via DocuSign, Chief Tan will return the fully executed copy to the Clerk of the Board.

Attachments:

- A. Grant Resolution, VMP Agreement #5GA21202 and SBC Fire Plan

Authored by:

Rob Hazard, Division Chief

cc:

Shawna Jorgensen, Chief Financial Officer

Rob Hazard, Division Chief

Fred Tan, Battalion Chief