



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/6/2024

File #: 24-145

To: Board of Supervisors
From: County Administrative Office
Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

National and International Travel for County Staff, Board members, and Community Partners for Offshore Wind

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve national and international travel for county staff and board members to participate in education and training opportunities related to offshore wind, workforce, supply chain, port, and economic development.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Economic Development (1120-287)

DISCUSSION:

On May 24, 2022, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to enhance community preparedness for the development of offshore wind. Additionally, the Board authorized the County Administrative Officer (CAO) to submit letters of support and funding requests related to this initiative on behalf of the county and the Board of Supervisors.

On Nov. 29, 2022, the Board adopted Resolution 22-140, advancing the county's commitment to sustainable offshore wind development, maximizing environmental and economic benefits, and minimizing or mitigating unavoidable impacts.

On March 14, 2023, the Board authorized the CAO, or their designee, to execute an Additional Assistance subgrant agreement in the amount of \$851,500 (Phase 1), awarded by the State of California Employment Development Division (EDD) for offshore wind-related activities. This grant was subsequently increased by \$648,500 (Phase 2), bringing the total funds awarded to the county to \$1.5 million.

For this purpose, in Phase 1, EDD issued to the county a subgrant AA211007 modification which incorporates an additional \$726,500 of Additional Assistance funding for offshore wind activity as specified in the Additional Assistance application for offshore wind funding. EDD also issued to the County a modification to subgrant AA311007, which incorporates another \$125,000 of Additional Assistance funding for the offshore wind activity. The subgrant modifications, the original agreements, and the Additional Assistance applications (which are signed by the EDD Field Division Chief) are attached to this item. While the Phase 2 funding application has been approved by EDD, the subgrant modifications will not be completed until Phase 1 funds have been fully expended.

EDD has affirmed that an allocation of funds is all that is required for a local workforce development board and grant recipient to spend funds on activities which are explicit in the Additional Assistance application(s). In Humboldt County's case, the original budgeted amount for travel activity was approved at \$100,000 (Phase 1), this was later amended and increased to \$250,000 (Phase 2). EDD has affirmed with staff its understanding that travel includes expenditures for out-of-area travel.

This grant has been allocated to provide offshore wind-related education opportunities for Board members, staff, and community partners, often in the form of summits, conferences, peer networking events, presentations, and tours, both within and outside the county, including national and international forums. These events offer crucial insights into industry advancements and networking opportunities with global leaders and experts. This explicitly includes travel activity outside of the county.

Participation in travel related events as funded through these allocations is essential for Humboldt County to maintain its innovative edge, forge strategic partnerships, and enhance workforce skills. Such involvement is instrumental in attracting investment, driving economic growth, and ensuring community inclusiveness in local projects. Learning from national and international practices in offshore wind development will help adopt sustainable methods and formulate effective policies, aligning Humboldt County's activities with international standards and local needs.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Board approve national and international travel for county staff, board members, and community partners (so long as such activity remains grant funded and overseen by the County Administrative Officer) to participate in education and training opportunities related to offshore wind, workforce, supply chain, port, and economic development. For Board participation, it is recommended that the two offshore wind Ad Hoc committees discuss and choose outside of chambers who will attend future travel and education opportunities from each Ad Hoc, thus ensuring no more than two total Board members participant and no more than one per Ad Hoc.

If approved by your Board, staff will proceed with making travel arrangements to visit the existing offshore wind project in New Bedford, Massachusetts, to visit other offshore wind areas domestically and abroad, and to attend offshore wind conferences and summits including the Offshore Wind Connections 2024 Annual Conference in Hull, England in May. Attendance at this event will provide county staff and officials opportunity to learn from and meet with experts and industry figures including original equipment manufacturers (OEM), government organizations, manufacturers, port operators, vessel owners and operations and maintenance service providers, who are working on offshore wind projects in other regions. As allowable by the grant, the approved Additional Assistance dollars for travel may also be used for other community, workforce and governmental partners who share a role in offshore wind in Humboldt County.

This action represents a strategic investment in the county's future and aligns with the aforementioned Resolution for offshore wind. Such engagement will not only elevate Humboldt County's stature in the sustainable energy sector globally but will also significantly contribute to local economic development, workforce readiness, and sustainable environmental practices.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Humboldt County has received two allocations from EDD for offshore wind activity. The first allocation (Phase 1) was a grant award of \$851,500, the second (Phase 2) was for \$648,500. Travel activity for offshore wind was initially approved at \$100,000 (Phase 1), however this was later amended and increased to \$250,000 (Phase 2). These expenditures are grant funded in Fund 1120, Budget Unit 287. There is anticipated to be no impact to the General Fund.

STAFFING IMPACT:

This action by your Board will not change staffing levels, nor will there be any salary impact to the General Fund. All staff time associated with this is being billed directly to the grant.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Framework.

Core Roles: Support business, workforce development and creation of private-sector jobs

New Initiatives: Engage in discussions of our regional economic future

Strategic Plan: 3.1 - Improve the economy of Humboldt County

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could decide not to approve this recommendation; however, this is not advisable as doing so would limit the county's educational, training, and networking opportunities related to its efforts to prepare for the emergence of offshore wind in Humboldt County.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Humboldt OSW Additional Assistance Application Phase 1
2. Humboldt OSW Additional Assistance Application Phase 2
3. HUMCO AA211007 WIOA Grant Agreement Mod 5
4. HUMCO AA211007 WIOA Original Grant Agreement
5. HUMCO AA311007 WIOA Grant Agreement Mod 4
6. HUMCO AA311007 WIOA Original Grant Agreement

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: 11/29/2022

File No.: 22-1584