



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 3/8/2022

File #: 22-228

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Public Works

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program Project Opportunities

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the attached resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works Director, or a designee thereof, to apply for, and, if awarded, accept and administer, competitive grant funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program in order to fund implementation of actions identified in the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan;
2. Adopt the attached resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works Director, or a designee thereof, to accept and administer noncompetitive grant funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program in order to support wildfire mitigation in the greater Willow Creek area of Humboldt County; and
3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to provide one (1) fully executed certified copy of each attached resolution to the Humboldt County Department of Public Works for submission to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program

DISCUSSION:

The California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program provides funding for local projects and activities that address the risk of wildfire and reduce wildfire potential to forested and forest adjacent communities. Funded activities include, without limitation, hazardous fuel reduction, fire planning and fire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Activities funded under this program are consistent with those recommended in the Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (“CWPP”). Staff recommendations aim to support the county’s continued role in working towards achieving the Wildfire Preparedness goal of the CWPP Countywide Action Plan.

The County of Humboldt has been invited by the California Department of Forestry and Fire

Protection (“CAL FIRE”) to be a grantee for a non-competitive, direct award under the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program. Although it is not a competitive process, the county is required to prepare and submit an application and associated documents. These funds are intended to support forest fuel hazard reduction operations in the greater Willow Creek area of Humboldt County. The wildfire mitigation needs within the wildland-urban interface of this target area were greatly increased by the impacts of the December snowstorm. Representatives of the CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit responded to this urgent need by recommending this direct funding award and working closely with county staff and other partners on project development.

In addition, staff is proposing a project for funding through the competitive 2021-2022 California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program which will represent phase five of a multi-phase approach to CWPP implementation and will complement and build on past CAL FIRE investments in Humboldt County. The proposed project incorporates lessons learned from past projects and is designed to support CWPP implementation partners to work with county staff and local community members to advance wildfire preparedness. County staff will administer the grant and manage the project. Implementation partners will take the lead, with county support and oversight, on completing wildfire preparedness activities including defensible space assistance; chipping programs; wildfire preparedness education and outreach; and future project planning. If the proposed CWPP implementation project is selected, a grant agreement will be executed, and work will begin in late 2022.

Accordingly, staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolutions which authorize the Humboldt County Department of Public Works Director, or a designee thereof, to conduct all negotiations, and enter into, execute and deliver any and all documents necessary to complete the proposed projects supported by the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program will provide much-needed revenue to supplement the funds that the county is already investing in community wildfire preparedness. Supplemental budgets will be brought to the Board for approval if and when grant agreements are executed.

The expense of preparing the applications for funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program will be covered by a fiscal year 2021-2022 General Fund allocation provided by the Board of Supervisors to the Department of Public Works and other planning grant sources already budgeted for Natural Resources Planning budget unit 1720-289. One of the intended uses of the General Fund allocation was to research funding sources and write grant proposals to support actions recommended in the Humboldt County CWPP.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

The recommended actions support the Board of Supervisors’ Strategic Framework by creating opportunities for improved safety and health and protecting vulnerable populations.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; Humboldt County Fire Safe Council

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose not to adopt the attached resolutions. However, this alternative is not recommended because of the community fire safety benefits that could be gained through the proposed projects.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to apply for, and, if awarded, accept and administer, competitive grant funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program
2. Resolution authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to accept and administer noncompetitive grant funding made available through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grants Program
3. Support letter from CAL FIRE Regarding a Direct Award of Noncompetitive Grant Funding

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A