



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/23/2019

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File #: 19-1061

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Planning and Building Department

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**SUBJECT:**

Resolution Authorizing the Submittal of a California Department of Conservation Grant to Support Climate Action Planning Efforts

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the attached Resolution No. \_\_\_\_:
  - a. Authorizing the submittal of an application for a California Department of Conservation (DOC) Local and Regional Planning Grant to develop a Natural and Working Lands element for the Humboldt County Regional Climate Action Plan (CAP); and
  - b. Authorizing the Director of Planning & Building Department to execute all necessary applications, contracts and agreements and amendments thereto, in the name of the County of Humboldt and all other documents required by California DOC for participation in the grant program.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

The salary funding for this work is included is in the General Fund contribution to the Long-Range Planning unit, 1100-282

**DISCUSSION:**

This item involves an opportunity to apply for funding to assist the county's efforts in developing a multijurisdictional Climate Action Plan (CAP). Attachment 1 of this staff report is a resolution that would authorize the Planning Director to submit a grant application to the California Department of Conservation (DOC) for up to \$300,000 to develop a natural and working lands element of the CAP. Applications are due July 31, 2019.

Projects funded by the grant will achieve are one or more of the following objectives:

- Protect agricultural and working lands from conversion to more intensified uses
- Protect natural resources
- Support local governments achieving statewide objectives that
  - o Reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions

- o Improve air and water quality
- o Promote public health
- o Increase infill and compact development
- o Revitalize urban and community centers
- o Reduce automobile usage and fuel consumption
- o Improve infrastructure systems
- o Promote water conservation
- o Promote energy efficiency and conservation

These objectives are described more fully in the Grant Application Summary in Attachment 2.

As with most CAP efforts, the Regional Humboldt County CAP (still a work-in-progress), focuses primarily on measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. However, improving carbon sequestration has been identified as a global priority in the effort to mitigate climate change. In the 2017 California Climate Change Scoping Plan, the California Air Resource Board (CARB) recommends that local agencies consider carbon sequestration in their climate action planning efforts. The CARB also details specific land management and conservation strategies to improve statewide carbon stocks in its Natural and Working Lands Climate Mitigation Plan.

County residents have requested that the county develop strategies related to carbon sequestration in agricultural and forest lands. In an online survey with 240 respondents, participants ranked “Forestry practices that enhance carbon sequestration” as the second-highest priority for the project. And at a Livestock Industries CAP Stakeholder Meeting held in May, local livestock producers requested that the county assess the carbon stocks held in pasture and range lands.

In response to public input, the department hopes to leverage DOC grant funding to complete a Natural and Working Lands Element to be incorporated in an update to the Climate Action Plan. It is envisioned the grant program will achieve the following objectives:

1. Conduct an inventory of carbon stocks in different land types throughout Humboldt County (i.e. pasture lands, forest lands, marsh lands, riparian areas);
2. Develop innovative strategies related to land management and conservation of agricultural lands to improve carbon sequestration throughout different land cover types
  - a. Prioritize strategies that provide priority co-benefits, preserve Humboldt County’s tradition of sustainable pasture-based animal agriculture operations and enable small-scale private landowners to implement forestry practices that improve carbon sequestration and wildfire resilience; and
3. Adapt Terra-Count software tool to Humboldt County conditions, allowing Planning & Building Department and partner agencies to forecast the results of potential strategies and monitor ongoing efforts after the CAP is adopted.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If successful, the county would receive up to \$300,000 of funding from this grant that would support

county staff and consultant work.

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:**

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by seeking outside funding sources to benefit Humboldt County needs.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The Department of Conservation will provide the funding and oversee implementation of the grant. The Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) is assisting the county in developing the CAP, and will likely be involved in this part of the project, although no formal agreement has been made. Other county agencies that will likely be involved in the project include the County Agricultural Commissioner and county Public Works - Natural Resources Division.

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Board could choose to not apply for these funds. This is not recommended as grant funds available for climate action planning are highly competitive and there may only be limited opportunities to apply.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A: Resolution authorizing submittal and signature for California Department of Conservation Grant
- Attachment B: California Department of Conservation Local and Regional Planning Grant Application Form

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Board Order No.: N/A  
Meeting of: N/A  
File No.: N/A