



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/23/2024

File #: 24-342

To: Board of Supervisors

From: County Administrative Office

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Memorandum of Understanding between County of Humboldt Economic Development Division and Partner Agencies for WindLINK Program

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve the establishment of the WindLINK Program partnership between the County of Humboldt Economic Development Division, Redwood Region Economic Development Commission, Redwood Coast Chamber Foundation, Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce, Northern California Small Business Development Center and NorCal APEX Accelerator;
2. Authorize the County Administrative Officer, upon review and approval by Risk Management, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the terms and responsibilities of each party involved in the WindLINK Program partnership; and
3. Direct staff to initiate the implementation of the WindLINK Program, including the development of resources and activities aimed at empowering local businesses to engage with economic opportunities related to port development and offshore wind in Humboldt County and funding agreement to facilitate this work.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Economic Development Fund (1120287)

DISCUSSION:

Following the selection of the coast of Humboldt County by the United States' Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for the development of Floating Offshore Wind projects, business and supply chain interest in the potential economic benefits to our community has increased and a greater need for supporting these interests for our business community has resulted.

On May 24, 2022, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to engage with local community partners to explore and vet opportunities and obligations surrounding the development of local supply chains and the preparedness of the workforce for offshore wind.

On Nov. 29, 2022, your Board unanimously adopted Resolution 22-140 (attached), furthering the county's proactive efforts to ensure that offshore wind development occurs in a sustainable manner, maximizes environmental and economic benefits to the region and minimizes or mitigates unavoidable impacts. In this Resolution your Board also directed staff to, "...work collaboratively with local stakeholders in creating a regional vision and roadmap for offshore wind development to prepare our community for sustainable and equitable development of the offshore wind industry..." and, "...take all reasonable additional steps to support offshore wind development in a manner that maximizes the benefits to the region..."

Since then, Economic Development staff have remained engaged and have collaborated with community partners, establishing The WindLINK Program. The WindLINK Program is a strategic partnership among the County of Humboldt Economic Development Division, Redwood Region Economic Development Commission (RREDC), Redwood Coast Chamber Foundation, Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce, Northern California Small Business Development Center, and NorCal APEX Accelerator.

RREDC makes loans to businesses in Humboldt County and leads projects which benefit the region’s economy. The Redwood Coast Chamber Foundation advances programs which support the economic vitality of our community by serving as a catalyst for business growth. The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce’s mission includes advancing the economic vitality of our community and advocating for a thriving place to work and live. The Northern California Small Business Development Center provides expert, no-fee advising to help established businesses and new startups realize their full potential. And the APEX Accelerator, formally known as the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP), was authorized by Congress in 1985 to focus on building a strong, sustainable, and resilient U.S. supply chains. Together with the County of Humboldt Economic Development Division this collaborative partnership aims to empower local businesses by providing them with resources and opportunities to better understand and engage with economic prospects arising from port development and offshore wind initiatives in Humboldt County.

The MOU establishes the framework for cooperation and outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the WindLINK Program. Through this partnership, the parties seek to leverage their expertise, connections, and resources to support the local business community and facilitate their participation in emerging economic sectors.

The WindLINK Program will offer various resources to local businesses, including networking opportunities, education and training, technical assistance, access to capital and financing, and up-to-date communication on relevant opportunities. These resources will be delivered through a combination of quarterly meetings, monthly newsletters, networking events, education and training sessions, social media announcements, and an online platform dedicated to WindLINK participants. The success of the WindLINK Program depends on the commitment of all parties involved to cooperate and work together in good faith. By fostering collaboration and providing valuable resources to local businesses, the WindLINK Program aims to contribute to the economic prosperity and sustainability of Humboldt County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

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Expenditures (1120, 287150)	FY23-24
Budgeted Expenses	50,000.00
Additional Appropriation Requested	0.00
Total Expenditures	50,000.00

*Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.

Funding Sources (1120, 287150)FY23-24	
General Fund	0.00
State/Federal Funds	50,000.00
Total Funding Sources	50,000.00

*Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The Economic Development Division has \$50,000 in seed funding for administration and staff time, i.e., through its Additional Assistance grant by the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). There are sufficient funds budgeted in the current fiscal year in 1120-287150.

This seed funding will provide staff and MOU partners six months to seek out other funding sources in order to make the WindLINK program financially sustainable for the long term. Some of this future funding is anticipated to come from the next phase of the Additional Assistance workforce funding from the state to support offshore wind and also from the future funding agreement with the wind developers to support economic development and workforce development activity.

The item before you today does not define financial requirements of the program in this phase. Staff will return to your Board at a future date as needed to define financial requirements.

STAFFING IMPACT:

The anticipated staff time to support this program is expected to be up to 600 hours annually. No additional staff are being procured for this program. As such, this program will be absorbed into existing staff efforts related to offshore wind and will restrict the Economic Development Division’s ability to take on additional projects or initiatives.

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: Facilitate public/private partnerships to solve problems

Strategic Plan: 3.1 - Improve the economy of Humboldt County

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Redwood Region Economic Development Commission Eureka Chamber & Redwood Coast Chamber Foundation, NorCal SBDC, NorCal APEX Accelerator

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Board Discretion

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WindLINK Memorandum of Understanding
2. November 2022 Board Resolution 22-140 on Offshore Wind

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A