



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 5/7/2024

File #: 24-738

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Public Works

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Resolution Authorizing the Humboldt County Department of Public Works to Apply For, Accept and Administer, on Behalf of the North Coast Resource Partnership, Grant Funding Made Available Through the California State Water Resource Control Board Proposition 1 Technical Assistance Program

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, accept and administer, on behalf of the North Coast Resource Partnership, grant funding made available through the California State Water Resource Control Board Proposition 1 Technical Assistance Program; and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to provide a fully executed certified copy of the attached resolution to the Humboldt County Department of Public Works for submission to the California State Water Resource Control Board; and
3. Find that acceptance of grant funding for the proposed work program is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15262 of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines; and
4. Approve and authorize the Director of Public Works, or a designee thereof, to execute and file the attached CEQA Notice of Exemption (Attachment 2).

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

California State Water Resource Control Board Proposition 1 Technical Assistance Grant Funds

DISCUSSION:

The North Coast Resource Partnership (“NCRP”) was initiated in 2004 as a water management

collaborative between the counties of Humboldt, Sonoma, Modoc, Mendocino, Trinity, Del Norte and Siskiyou. The NCRP is now a successful coalition of north coast counties and tribes that have successfully worked together to leverage over One Hundred and Ninety Million Dollars (\$190,000,000) in grants and matching contributions to support water and wastewater infrastructure, water resource, climate change adaptation, and wildfire resilience projects throughout the North Coast Region. The NCRP is governed by a Leadership Council (LC) comprised of appointees selected by and from over 30 Tribes in the region as well as county boards of supervisors. In 2005, the NCRP LC designated the County of Humboldt as the Regional Contract Administrator on behalf of the NCRP. In addition, Humboldt County is currently represented on the NCRP LC by Supervisors Steve Madrone and Rex Bohn with Supervisor Natalie Arroyo serving as an alternate member. As members of the NCRP LC, these Supervisors will provide oversight and guidance as the project described below is completed. Visit the NCRP Homepage, at northcoastresourcepartnership.org, for more information about this collaborative.

The NCRP was approached by staff from the California State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”) to develop a scope of work and funding proposal to assist with the delivery of technical assistance throughout the North Coast region. If funding is secured, the NCRP would expand its existing technical assistance capacity to investigate community and tribal water/wastewater infrastructure needs throughout the region. Efforts would be made to identify where tangible needs are located, to develop plans of study and other appropriate Clean Water State Revolving Fund (“CWSRF”) funding applications, and to prioritize high priority projects based on important criteria such as threat to human health and water quality as developed in collaboration with the North Coast Regional Water Board and approved by the NCRP Leadership Council. Focus will be aimed at wastewater projects, but other infrastructure needs that are identified in the pursuit of wastewater projects would be noted and coordinated to the applicable agencies or grant/loan processes. The program would focus on publicly owned or managed community/Tribal water/wastewater service providers in the North Coast region, limited to such systems that are small and economically disadvantaged. The goal would be to assist with the preparation and submission of up to 24 planning and/or construction CWSRF grant applications.

The County of Humboldt is the lead agency for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). The project as described herein involves information collection and feasibility and planning studies which do not involve a commitment to implement any specific actions. Staff recommends that the Board find that the project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Sections 15262 and 15306 of the CEQA Guidelines. Further, staff recommends that the Board authorize the Director of Public Works, or a designee thereof, to execute and record the attached CEQA Notice of Exemption (Attachment 2).

In its role as the Regional Contract Administrator for the NCRP, the administration of funds, such as those offered through this program, is the responsibility of the County of Humboldt, Public Works Natural Resources Planning division. Staff is now requesting that the Board authorize the Humboldt County Public Works Director, or a designee thereof, to apply for, accept, and administer this funding to support the provision of technical assistance throughout the North Coast Region; including the filing of the required NOE.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

Once the Technical Assistance grant funds have been awarded and a grant agreement is successfully negotiated, a supplemental budget, currently estimated at \$3,000,000, will be brought to the Board for approval or, depending on the timing, the funds will be incorporated into the fiscal year budget process - Natural Resources Planning budget unit 1720-289. The expense of preparing this agenda item and other associated administrative tasks is covered by other NCRP planning grant sources already budgeted for in the Natural Resources Planning budget unit 1720-289.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:

Securing this new multiyear grant revenue will help maintain current Department of Public Works - Natural Resources Planning staffing levels. Activities planned through this funding will complement and expand upon existing programs currently funded through other grants, some of which will be expiring during the term of this new grant. The workload will be adjusted as needed among current staff and monitored on an ongoing basis. The need for additional personnel is not projected.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

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

Core Roles: Provide for and maintain infrastructure

New Initiatives: Seek outside funding sources to benefit Humboldt County needs

Strategic Plan: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The member Counties and Tribal Nations of the North Coast Resource Partnership

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose not to take the recommended action. However, this alternative is not recommended because of the local, regional, and tribal benefits that could be gained with the support of these regional technical assistance funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

File #: 24-738

Attachment 1: Resolution Re Technical Assistance Funding

Attachment 2: Draft California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A