



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors

From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department

Date: August 15, 2017

Subject: ACCEPT Grant to Perform a Renewable Resource Potential Study

RECOMMENDATION(S):

APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Conservation and Development Director, or designee, to accept a grant and execute a grant award agreement in an amount not to exceed \$48,989 from the California Department of Conservation to perform a Renewable Resource Potential Study, for the period August 15, 2017 through March 1, 2019.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The County will receive a grant for \$48,989. Performing the Study will include some in-kind contributions of staff time, expected to be \$23,500. These contributions will be funded from the General Fund allocation approved for the Sustainability Coordinator (\$11,000) and Land Development Fund (\$12,500).

BACKGROUND:

In December 2015, Contra Costa County adopted its first Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP calls for the County to increase the amount of renewable energy deployed on homes, businesses, and public lands and buildings. Achieving this goal will be facilitated by deeper knowledge about locations in the unincorporated County and on County facilities with greatest potential to host distributed-scale renewable energy. Staff has been notified that the

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **08/15/2017** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: August 15, 2017

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Jody London,
925-674-7871

cc:

County has been approved for funds through the Strategic Growth Council to perform a Renewable Resource Potential Study (Study).

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

The Study will consist of three tasks. Task 1 will be a Renewable Resource Potential Assessment, looking at opportunities and constraints for expanding generation of renewable energy in the County. Task 2 will review existing land use regulations (General Plan and zoning) that are relevant to the siting and installation of renewable energy resources, and develop recommendations regarding updates to those ordinances or suggest new ordinances that consider various zoning districts (commercial, industrial, agricultural, etc.), technology types, and other variables. Task 3 will work with the communities of Bay Point, Rodeo, and North Richmond on opportunities for residents of those communities, which the State considers “disadvantaged” under the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 rubric, to benefit from renewable energy.

The Department of Conservation and Development (“DCD”) will conduct this study. DCD will engage a consultant to provide services for the first two tasks, in coordination with County staff. DCD staff are investigating the cost associated with expanding the technical study to the cities in the County. Once those costs are known for interested cities, staff will identify funding options from other sources that might be able to match the funds provided through this grant. DCD staff will be leading and implementing the community outreach task (Task 3), which will be informed by the first and second tasks.

The Renewable Resource Potential Study also supports the recent decisions by the County and several of the cities in the County to join MCE. The community choice energy (CCE) technical study included an assessment of solar resources in the County, which will provide the starting point for the Renewable Resource Potential Assessment. The Renewable Resource Potential Study also leverages work the County is doing on the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative (NWEDI). In the CCE technical study, 40 percent of the potential solar energy sites were identified in the Northern Waterfront area.

When the Renewable Resource Potential Study is complete, deliverables from Task 1, Renewable Resource Potential Assessment, will include a database of potential sites that can be sorted by location, technology type, size, and whether there is existing transmission and distribution infrastructure, or whether that would need to be developed. The County will also have maps of candidate sites, with attention to whether they are eligible for MCE’s feed-in tariff, are located in the NWEDI, and/or are candidate locations for community energy projects, particularly in the communities of Bay Point, North Richmond, and Rodeo.

The deliverable from Task 2, potential changes to County land use regulations, will include recommendations regarding updates to the General Plan and zoning ordinance that are relevant to the siting and installation of renewable energy resources. Task 2 may include recommendations for various approaches related to zoning, technology types, and other variables.

The deliverable from Task 3 will consist of collaboration with the municipal advisory councils of Bay Point, Rodeo, and North Richmond to increase awareness of and support for greater deployment of renewable resources. The Study also will collaborate with the municipal advisory councils to identify options that allow residents of those communities to receive electricity from local renewable resources. The land use regulation review under Task 2 will include review of the area-specific General Plan and zoning regulations adopted for Bay Point, Rodeo, and North Richmond.

DCD continually receives inquiries from developers of distribution-scale solar energy facilities regarding the possibility of constructing such facilities in the unincorporated area. The rate of these inquiries has increased since the Board voted in May to join MCE. However, neither the General Plan nor zoning ordinance contain provisions specific to such projects. DCD will propose, as an interim step while the Study is being completed, to undertake minor amendments to the zoning ordinance that would allow for development of distribution-scale solar projects in areas designated “Heavy Industry” and “Light Industry” upon issuance of a land use permit. These areas tend to already be disturbed, often have high demand for electricity, and often include buffers around large industrial uses that lend themselves to development of solar. By requiring use permits, the County would retain its ability to modify or deny projects that might be incompatible with neighboring uses or conflict with long-term economic development goals. DCD intends to bring this recommendation to the Board through a separate, future Board Order.

The Renewable Resource Potential Study must be completed by March 2019 under the terms of the proposed contract with the State. Staff will aim to complete the study by mid-2018.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

If the grant is not accepted, the County will not be able to conduct a Renewable Resource Potential Study.

CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Strategic Growth Council Grant - Renewable Resource Potential Study