

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 7**

**SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION FOR THE CLIMATE SMART LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; FIND THE ACTIONS ARE EXEMPT UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

On August 3, 2011 (1), the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the development of the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program as part of the comprehensive update to the County of San Diego's (County) General Plan. The PACE Program promotes the long-term preservation of agricultural land in the unincorporated area. Voluntary property owners are compensated for placing permanent easements on their agricultural property, limiting future uses to only agricultural operations, and ending future development potential. As a result, the agricultural land is preserved, and the property owner receives compensation making the land's continued use for agriculture more viable. Additionally, on August 31, 2022 (6) the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a Pilot Carbon Farming Program to encourage adoption and local scalability of carbon farming practices that account for greenhouse gas emissions reductions and promote soil health. The direction also included a return to the Board with options for program implementation, including a list of identified pilot projects. As directed, Planning & Development Services (PDS) staff are in the program development process for the Pilot Carbon Farming Program. Both programs are key components of the County's sustainability efforts.

Staff have identified the California Department of Conservation Climate Smart Land Management (CSLM) Program: Capacity Building and Technical Assistance as a funding source for the PACE and Pilot Carbon Farming Program. The funds may be used to streamline and automate the existing PACE Program, which would allow for greater accessibility to the public and allow for the processing of a greater numbers of applications. The grant will fund expanded PACE outreach and engagement efforts to increase the number of agricultural producers participating in the program. Additionally, the funds may be used to continue to develop and implement the Pilot Carbon Farming Program and help cover costs associated with technical requirements (e.g., soil testing) of the program, thereby removing potential cost burdens for farmers interested in participating. Carbon farming refers to a suite of different farming techniques that increase the rate at which carbon is sequestered into the soil and plants.

The overarching goal of the CSLM Program is to build the capacity of local, tribal, regional, and Statewide partners to increase the pace and scale of climate action on California's natural and working lands in a socially, ecologically, and geographically equitable manner. The grant is specifically interested in supporting partners in implementing the nature-based solutions in the State's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy and Pathways to 30x30: Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature. Both of these documents reference the value of supporting local agriculture as a

nature-based climate solution and specifically refer to climate smart agriculture, which can include farming practices that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and store it in the soil or plant biomass.

This is a request for the Board of Supervisors to adopt a Resolution that authorizes the County to apply for and accept a CSLM Program grant. If the County is selected for an award, it also authorizes the Director of PDS or a designee to execute all related documents.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find that the proposed actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3), Section 15301, and Section 15304 of the California CEQA Guidelines.
2. Adopt a Resolution entitled: RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING DIRECTOR, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION CLIMATE SMART LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT (Attachment A).
3. Authorize the Director, Planning & Development Services, or their designee, to execute all required grant documents pertaining to the CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION CLIMATE SMART LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, annual extensions, revisions, payment requests, and/or any agreements and/or memorandums of understanding with other entities as co-applicants, participants, and/or partners in the application and spending of grant funds received, that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level and may be necessary for completion of the grant deliverables.
4. Waive Board Policy B-29, *Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery*, which requires full cost recovery for services provided under grants.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Application to the Climate Smart Land Management (CSLM) grant will allow continued financial support to develop and implement the Purchase of Agricultural Easements (PACE) and Pilot Carbon Farming Programs in San Diego County. The grant will help cover costs associated with technical requirements (e.g., soil testing) of the Pilot Carbon Farming Program thereby removing potential cost burdens for farmers interested in participating. Additionally, the grant will fund outreach and engagement efforts and an automated online system for both the Pilot Carbon Farming Program and the PACE Program. Funding elements of the two programs will also increase program reach and accessibility. Furthermore, the Pilot Carbon Farming Program will utilize an equity-driven approach by emphasizing support to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Purchase of Agricultural Easements (PACE) Program is part of the 2018 Climate Action Plan, and

both the PACE Program and Pilot Carbon Farming Program align with the Climate Action Plan Update that is in process. Additionally, land conservation and carbon farming are referenced in the Natural Climate Solutions and Other Land Use Considerations chapter of the Regional Decarbonization Framework's Technical Report. If awarded, the Climate Smart Land Management grant will provide funding to continue the development of the Pilot Carbon Farming Program and the PACE Program, thereby positively impacting the environment and the County's commitment to sustainability.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 CAO Recommended Operational Plan Change Letter in the Department of Planning & Development Services (PDS). If approved and the grant is awarded, this could result in estimated costs and revenue of up to \$1,000,000 over the grant term (three years) in Fiscal Years 2023-24 through Fiscal Year 2025-26. If the grant is awarded to PDS, at a later date funds will be included in a future quarterly adjustment. The funding source is the California Department of Conservation, appropriated by the Budget Act of 2022 (AB 179, Ch. 249, Stat. 2022). There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

#### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

#### **ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Anderson, seconded by Supervisor Desmond, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, On Consent, adopting Resolution No. 23-046, entitled: RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING DIRECTOR, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION CLIMATE SMART LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Desmond

NOT PRESENT: Lawson-Remer

ABSENT: (District 4 Seat Vacant)

State of California)

County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



**Signed**

**by** Andrew Potter



MAY 24, 2023