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Title: Chief Administrative Office recommending the following:
 1) Board appoint Supervisor Ranalli as the El Dorado County representative to the State of California Tree Mortality Task Force; and
 2) Receive and file an update from Supervisor Ranalli on the State of California Tree Mortality Task Force. (Est. Time: 10 Min.)

FUNDING: N/A

Sponsors:

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Attachments: 1. A - TreeMortality Presentation 8-15-17

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DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION:

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 2) Receive and file an update from Supervisor Ranalli on the State of California Tree Mortality Task Force.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

On October 30, 2015, Governor Brown proclaimed a State of Emergency due to unprecedented tree mortality caused by conditions of extreme drought and drought-related bark beetle infestations. The Governor's Emergency Proclamation contains 18 distinct actions that direct state agencies, utilities and local governments to remove dead or dying trees in high hazard areas across the entire State of California.

On March 28, 2016, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in El Dorado County.

Data collected by State and federal agencies demonstrates that drought conditions and bark beetle

infestation have killed over 102 million trees in the State of California, and that tens of millions more are likely to die over the next five to six years. Surveys conducted by the U.S. Forest Service in May estimate that new tree mortality (between October 2015 and May 2016) in El Dorado County has affected an estimated 512,000 conifer trees. Many of these trees are located in the Eldorado National Forest or on private land. However, some of these trees endanger County infrastructure (e.g., County roads and County buildings). In comparison, counties to the south of El Dorado County have had the following estimated number of dead conifer trees (between October 2015 and May 2016):

Tulare County - 8,100,000
Madera County - 3,800,000
Mariposa County - 3,200,000
Tuolumne County - 2,500,000
Kern County - 2,200,000

Acting alone, El Dorado County lacks the capacity and resources to address this expanding emergency that threatens County infrastructure. The Board's adoption of Resolution 053-2016 on March 28, 2016 enabled the County to start the process to seek State and possibly Federal funding and demonstrated the County's intent to partner with State, Federal, and local agencies and with private partners in order to immediately and effectively address tree mortality throughout the County.

On May 17, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's Tree Mortality Hazard Tree Removal Plan and allowed for the process of assessing the amount of dead trees that are threatening County maintained road infrastructure by transferring funds to the Community Development Agency to complete the count. The Facilities Division completed a dead tree count on County property that threatens County infrastructure.

Through the tree count, at the time, the County estimated that it had approximately 3,100 trees to remove that threaten county infrastructure (e.g., County roads or County buildings). Of the 3,100 trees that need removal, approximately 2,800 are threatening County roads and 300 are threatening County buildings and other infrastructure. These numbers are just estimates of the number of dead and diseased trees to be removed due to the threat to County-owned infrastructure. The number of dead and diseased trees has increased over the summer and fall and new tree count numbers will be available soon. It is important to note that trees marked for actual removal under California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) funding must be verified by Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) or Certified Arborists.

On August 2, 2016 (agenda item 33), the Board of Supervisors authorized the Chair to sign the CDAA application and authorized the submittal of the application for funding related to the State's declared Tree Mortality emergency.

On September 2, 2016, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department was notified by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services that the County was approved for CDAA funding.

On April 11, 2017 (item 18) the Board awarded a contract for the Licensed Timber Operator - Phase 1 Grizzly Flats and Camino Project to fall and remove 405 trees. Notice to proceed was issued on May 17, 2017 and as of June 30, 2017, 284 trees had been removed. The anticipated completion date for Phase 1 is August 11, 2017.

As Phase 1 has progressed, Transportation staff has continued obtaining rights of entry to additional

parcels with trees that meet the conditions for removal under CDAA grant funding. As these rights of entry have been granted, Black Fox, a licenced forrester, has continued assessing and marking trees for removal. Transportation has received a total of 40 executed permits to enter private property to inspect, identify, and remove dead or dying trees. On these 40 parcels, Black Fox has identified 155 trees that qualify for removal under CDAA funding, comprised of 86 trees in Happy Valley, 64 trees in Grizzly Flats, and 5 trees in Camino. Removal of these 155 trees comprises the scope of the subject Phase 2 project.

In an effort to coordinate the tree mortality operations in El Dorado County with other counties and state agencies, the Governor's Office requested that a member of the Board of Supervisors for each of the effected counties attend meetings in Sacramento on a monthly basis. These meetings include the State of California Tree Mortality Task Force meeting. Supervisor Ranalli has been representing El Dorado County on the task force for over a year.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose to not to approve the appointment of Supervisor Ranalli to the State of California Tree Mortality Task Force. Another Board Member could be appointed to the Task Force.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

Public Safety and Infrastructure goals.

CONTACT

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