



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 24-1067, **Version:** 1

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Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience, a Division of the Chief Administrative Office, recommending the Board:

- 1) Accept a grant award under the Bureau of Land Management Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program Activities to fund the El Dorado County Fire Adapted Communities Program, in the amount of up to \$10,000,000 and with a term of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2029;
- 2) Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, to sign the final Notice of Award and Grant Agreement, if necessary to secure the grant funds, contingent upon County Counsel approval; and
- 3) Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, to execute any grant related documents including, but not limited to, the grant agreement, amendments for term extensions and increases to grant funding that do not increase Net County Cost, requests for payments, reports, and all other associated documents necessary to secure the grant funds and implement the approved project.

**FUNDING:** Bureau of Land Management Cooperative Assistance - Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program Activities.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California State Office, has offered grant funding to work with partner organizations to assist with fuels management and community fire assistance program activities to reduce the risk and impact of catastrophic wildfires to local communities through coordination, reducing the amount of hazardous fuels, and furthering the education of landowners about wildfire prevention and mitigation. These activities will assist BLM in working to create resilient landscapes and communities, creating jobs, and helping further conservation and restoration efforts by providing an opportunity to support planning and implementation of hazardous fuels reduction projects in wild-land urban interface (WUI) areas and education and outreach programs that help create fire adapted communities and resilient landscapes.

On May 4, 2023, the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience (OWPR) submitted an application to the BLM for a comprehensive Fire Adapted Communities Program for the grant period of October 2023 through September 2028. Although BLM initially provided notification that this application was not funded in this grant cycle, BLM has subsequently notified OWPR that a portion of the requested funding is available now and has approved OWPR's grant application for this project. BLM issued a draft Notice of Award and Grant Agreement for the grant period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029. Upon the Board's acceptance of this grant, BLM will issue a final Notice of Award and Grant Agreement, including updated project milestone dates and funding available for immediate use. BLM has also indicated that as additional funds become available throughout the duration of the grant term, modifications or amendments will be issued to authorize the additional funds.

Additional project information is included in the County's Fire Adapted Communities Project Proposal (Attachment C). An overview of the proposed activities under this grant include, but are not limited to,

the following:

- Implement a comprehensive, year-round defensible space and home hardening inspection program that focuses on community outreach and voluntary compliance with local and state defensible space regulations and laws, increasing the number of inspections currently conducted by the County, providing funding assistance to participating local fire agencies and fire safe councils to build capacity for additional defensible space and home hardening program implementation.
- Perform defensible space work on homes located in rural and low-income communities based on the defensible space evaluations performed by fire safe councils, fire districts, CAL FIRE, and the County.
- Relying on information from the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan anticipated to be completed in Spring 2025, assess the network of existing and proposed strategic fuel breaks within El Dorado County that are in proximity to lands managed by BLM. OWPR will work with the local resource conservation districts and other agencies to complete maintenance on existing fuel breaks and to initiate new projects that protect local communities and associated federal lands from the threat of wildfires.
- Provide funding to maintain the Fire Safe Coordinator position within OWPR, funded in 2024 under a separate Fire Safe Coordinator Grant, through June 2029, whose role is to organize, facilitate, and participate in outreach activities to educate members of the public in coordination with the now 32 associate Fire Safe Councils, on fire prevention, defensible space, home hardening, and other fire safety activities and projects.

OWPR has filled the Fire Safe Coordinator position effective June 3, 2024 and is currently in discussion with CAL FIRE and the local Fire Chiefs on the process for providing funding for developing an enhanced defensible space inspection program to implement under this grant.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Board may choose not to accept this grant funding and therefore, forfeit the \$10,000,000 in available funding for this project. As a result, OWPR would need to explore alternative funding options to fund the Fire Safe Coordinator position beyond December 2024.

## **PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

N/A

## **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

N/A

## **CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS**

Approve as recommended.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no increase to Net County Cost associated with the acceptance of this grant and no local matching funds are required. As the Notice of Award was issued following the development of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget, these grant funds will be included in through the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget process.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

N/A

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

N/A

**CONTACT**

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