



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1844, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board consider the following:

- 1) Approve the use of the Fiscal Year 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Resiliency Allocation (\$399,490) as recommended by the El Dorado County Continuity Coordination Implementation Group and Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services; and
- 2) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign the attached budget transfer, increasing revenues and appropriations in the Sheriff's Office and the Chief Administrative Office. (Est. Time 20 Min.)

FUNDING: California Office of Emergency Services PSPS Resiliency Funding.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), the electrical power provider for the County's West Slope, implemented its "Public Safety Power Shutoff" policy in 2019. This policy provides for de-energization of PG&E's service areas when gusty winds and dry conditions combine with a high fire risk. In 2019, El Dorado County experienced four multiple-day power shutoffs, some of which affected more than 50,000 customers within the County.

Recognizing how these power outages can affect local governments' ability to serve the public, the Governor and Legislature included a one-time \$75 million dollar allocation in the 2019 State Budget to provide funding to support state and local government efforts to improve resilience in response to the PSPS events. Half of the funding was allocated to local governments, and El Dorado County's allocation is \$399,490.

Allowable uses include:

- Equipment purchases
 - Generators and generator connections for essential facilities, with an emphasis on clean energy and green solutions where possible or other alternative backup power sources
 - Generator fuel and storage
 - Redundant emergency communications
- Plans
 - Continuity plans
 - Development/update of contingency plans for electrical disruptions that include considerations such as protecting individuals with access and functional needs, medical baseline and socially vulnerable populations, transportation, emergency public information, and preservation of essential functions
 - Risk assessments for critical infrastructure and lifelines
 - Post-event reports that identify lessons learned and corrective actions
- Public education materials or supplies focused on individual and family preparedness for electric disruptions
- One-time costs associated with identifying and equipping resource centers for the public to access during electrical disruptions

Response costs associated with electric disruption events, including any staffing or new positions, Emergency Operations Center staffing, security, law or fire response, and overtime charges are not allowable expenses.

The CCIG is the group tasked with implementing the County's Continuity of Operations and Government Plan (COOP/COG). This group solicited suggestions for uses of the funding from departments and then met with the Sheriff's OES to evaluate the suggestions. The group first considered whether the suggested uses were allowed pursuant to the funding guidelines. All suggested uses, with the exception of one, are allowable uses. The group identified a number of criteria to assist in evaluating the allowable suggested uses. In declining order of priority, the criteria were:

1. No alternative funding available
2. Support of government function
 - Critical (public safety)
 - Core function (continuity of government)
 - Risk mitigation/preservation of resources
3. Benefit to multiple agencies

The attached list provides the suggested uses and the group's recommendations. This list was also presented to all department heads for their feedback at the December 6, 2019 department heads meeting. There was consensus to bring the list forward as presented to the Board for consideration.

The following recommended uses all meet the criteria above.

- **Backup power for radio repeater sites:**
Maintenance of radio communication is critical to public safety and benefits the Sheriff, Placerville Police and Public Works, fire agencies, and school districts. Upgrades to five repeater sites identified by the Sheriff are estimated at \$56,000.
- **Additional generator capacity for the Placerville Jail:**
The Placerville Jail needs to enhance the electrical infrastructure and increase generator capacity to provide power to areas of the Placerville Jail that are unlit during extended power outages. Currently, the kitchen and laundry areas are not fully powered during outages increasing risk of injury for both staff and inmates utilizing these spaces. There are additional areas of the jail where lighting is compromised during extended power outages that also need to be addressed (booking, holding cells and safety cells). This is a matter of safety for inmates and staff, and helps to ensure the jail will be able to continue to provide appropriate facilities during an extended power outage. The estimated cost is \$75,000.
- **Continuity of Operations and Government Planning:**
The Chief Administrative Office is responsible for ensuring that County departments prepare for emergencies and have plans in place to continue operations during an emergency. Much of this coordination is done by staff in the CAO's Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Preparedness and Response Division. The Emergency Preparedness function is funded by public health preparedness grants and public health realignment. In order to ensure that staff

has the flexibility to perform needed planning and training activities that may not be supported by their grants, the CAO had planned to ask the Board for a General Fund contribution to cover salary and benefits for such activities. Using this funding instead will spare the General Fund for this year, though the need will still exist in future years. The request is \$35,000.

- **Internal County communication tool:**

The County does not have one single, effective mass notification system to provide one-way, coordinated internal communication to all County employees. Often, important and time-sensitive notifications are sent out via email, posted on EDCnet and/or available via the building closure line and don't always reach the intended recipients in a timely manner. The Emergency Preparedness staff have identified a tool called Alert Media that will provide much needed capability to communicate with employees quickly. The cost is \$15,000.

- **Increased generator capacity in County government buildings:**

The remaining funds (\$218,490) are recommended for additional generator capacity to maintain government operations. Many County facilities do not have generator power backup. Notably, Building A, where the Board and executive functions are housed, is not supported by the generator that powers Building B. As a result, it is at the top of the list for facilities recommended for generator power.

The building on Briw Road in Placerville, which houses the Health and Human Services Agency, is also recommended for backup power due to essential services the agency provides to vulnerable populations as well as the costs associated with closing that building during an extended outage. The salary and benefits costs to HHSA for the outages in October totaled nearly \$170,000, the vast majority of which is related to the Briw Road building. As this is a leased facility, the CCIG recommended considering a portable generator, similar to that used in Building C. Registrar of Voter Bill O'Neill has determined that grant money for Elections could be used to purchase a permanent generator for Building C with a minimal County match. This would allow for redeployment of that building's portable generator to Briw Road. Any remaining funds would be used to purchase additional generator capacity, either permanent or portable, for other County facilities housing governmental operations.

Allowable uses that were not recommended by the CCIG included adding backup power to sites that do not house governmental operations or sites that were not affected by the PSPS. The CCIG and the larger department head group do not support adding generator capacity to facilities for the purpose of opening Community Resource Centers. This has been, and should continue to be, the responsibility of PG & E. The consensus was that the focus of this limited source of funding should be on public safety and continuity of government.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could propose additional or alternate uses.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

COOP/COG Implementation Group, OES, County department heads

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This is a one-time allocation from the State and does not require a County match.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Obtain the Chair's signature on the budget transfer form and return the fully executed form to the CAO.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Good Governance- maintaining governmental operations and services during an extended outage supports the public and demonstrates good stewardship of our public resources.

Public Safety- maintaining radio communications for public safety agencies and schools during an extended outage is of critical importance to ensuring public safety.

CONTACT

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