



Monterey County

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Board Report

Legistar File Number: RES 17-095

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Current Status: Agenda Ready

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Adopt resolutions to:

- a. Approve the Ag Land Trust Easement Proposals to the California Department of Conservation Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program for the Thompson Farm, Silverlake Ranch, Martella Ranch, Daugherty Ranch and Marihart Ranch; and
- b. Support the Ag Land Trust grant funding application to receive grant funds from the State of California Department of Conservation SALC Program to acquire agricultural conservation easements over the Thompson Farm, Silverlake Ranch, Martella Ranch, Daugherty Ranch and Marihart Ranch; and
- c. Direct the Resource Management Agency Director or Chief of Planning, to collaborate with the Ag Land Trust in the grant application process.

REF170016 -Ag Land Trust Support

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Approve the Ag Land Trust Easement Proposals to the California Department of Conservation Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program for the Thompson Farm, Silverlake Ranch, Martella Ranch, Daugherty Ranch and Marihart Ranch;
- b. Support the Ag Land Trust grant funding application to receive grant funds from the State of California Department of Conservation SALC Program to acquire agricultural conservation easements over the Thompson Farm, Silverlake Ranch, Martella Ranch, Daugherty Ranch and Marihart Ranch; and
- c. Direct the Resource Management Agency Director or Chief of Planning, to collaborate with the Ag Land Trust in the grant application process.

SUMMARY:

The Ag Land Trust has applied to the California Department of Conservation (DoC) for funding from the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Grant Program. The goal of the SALC program is to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the protection of agricultural land via the purchase of agricultural conservation easements or by enacting local strategies that result in permanent agricultural land protection. The Ag Land Trust purpose is to acquire agriculture conservation easements on five (5) ranches totaling approximately 1,335 acres (Attachment A): Thompson Farm (129 acres) (APN Nos. 227-063-004-000 and 414-012-001-000) (Attachment B); Silverlake Ranch (571 acres) (APN Nos. 183-011-014-000 and 257-101-014-000)(Attachment C); Martella Ranch (177 acres) (APN Nos. 235-081-030-000, 235-161-009-000 and 235-161-010-000) (Attachment D); Daugherty Ranch (67 acres) (APN No. 207-071-004-000) (Attachment E); and Marihart Ranch (413 acres) (APN Nos. 137-041-019-000, 139-101-029-000 and 139-101-029-000) (Attachment F). The Ag Land

Trust has requested the Board of Supervisors issue resolutions of support for the Ag land Trust to include in their application to the DoC for the grant funds.

On May 2, 2016, the County of Monterey RMA-Planning submitted a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) grant application to the State Department of Conservation to provide funding for the development of an Agricultural Land Mitigation Program to mitigate the loss of Important Farmland (as mapped by the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program) in accordance with 2010 General Plan Policy No. AG-1.12. which states,

AG-1.12 The County shall prepare, adopt, and implement a program that requires projects involving a change of land use designation resulting in the loss of Important Farmland (as mapped by the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program) to mitigate the loss of that acreage. For such land to be annexed to incorporated areas, the County shall work in consultation with the cities to mitigate the loss of Important Farmland resulting from annexation. The program may include ratios, payment of fees, or some other mechanisms. Mitigation mechanisms established through this program shall be based upon a graduated value of the Important Farmland, with mitigation for loss of prime land having the highest agricultural value. The County shall support private, non-profit land trusts and conservation organizations to promote the policies of this General Plan, facilitate the implementation of the program, and to receive, by voluntary donation or purchase, development rights on any lands to be preserved as part of this program's implementation strategy....

One requirement of the SALC Grant program, when being considered for grant funds for the development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program, is a partnership with a non-profit agency to place agricultural property into Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACE). Prior to the County applying to the DoC, the County found a partnership with the Ag Land Trust to place the **Thompson Farm**, which consists of a 129.42-acre parcel situated at the intersection of McFadden Road and Highway 183, approximately 1.5 miles west of the City limits of Salinas (APN Nos. 227-063-004-000 and 414-012-001-000) into an ACE. The Ag Land Trust has applied to the DoC for grant funds to acquire agricultural conservation easements on prime farmlands or lands that may be subject to conversion pressures. The Ag Land Trust seeks to acquire ACE easements over the Thompson Farm and four (4) other properties (Attachment A) including the **Silverlake Ranch** (APN Nos. 183-011-014-000 and 257-101-014-000) which consists of two (2) parcels totaling 571 acres situated on the east side of U.S. Highway 101, at the intersection of U.S. Highway 101 and Doud Road, on the southern border of the City limits of Soledad, the **Martella Ranch** (APN Nos. 235-081-030-000, 235-161-009-000 and 235-161-010-000) which consists of three (3) parcels totaling 177 acres bisected by U.S. Highway 101, approximately two (2) miles south of the City limits of King City, the **Daugherty Ranch** (APN No. 207-071-004-000) which consists of a 67 acre parcel situated between Kipling Street and Hitchcock Road, west of Highway 68 on the south boarder of the

City limits of Salinas, and the **Marihart Ranch** (APN Nos. 137-041-019-000, 139-101-029-000 and 139-101-029-000) which consists of three (3) parcels totaling 413 acres situated 0.5 miles from the intersection of River Road and Somovia Road, approximately 3.7 miles south of the City limits of Salinas. The Ag Land Trust is requesting support from the Board to move forward towards the goal of acquiring agricultural conservation easements on the subject properties.

Further, the Ag Land Trust's easement proposals meet the eligibility criteria set forth in California Public Resources Code Section 10251 as summarized below:

- (a) The parcel proposed for conservation is expected to be used for, and is large enough to sustain, commercial agricultural production. The land is also in an area that possesses the necessary market, infrastructure, and agricultural support services, and surrounding parcel sizes and land uses will support long-term commercial agricultural production.
- (b) Monterey County has a general plan which demonstrates a long-term commitment to agricultural land conservation. This commitment is reflected in the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the plan, as they relate to the area, of Monterey County were the easement acquisitions are proposed.
- (c) Without conservation, the land proposed for protection is likely to be converted to nonagricultural use in the foreseeable future.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office collaborated in the completion of the County of Monterey and the Ag Land Trust (Thomas Farm) Agricultural Land Mitigation Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Project Grant Application.

Due to late submission of this board report, the CAO Budget and Analysis Division was not provided adequate time to fully review for potential fiscal, organizational, policy, or other implications to the County of Monterey.

FINANCING:

It is anticipated that development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program to be funded through this grant will be performed by existing staff under RMA-Planning. Funding for RMA-Planning staff time associated with development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program is included in the FY17-18 Recommended Budget for RMA-Planning, but the grant revenues for reimbursing the County were not. The grant application to the State Department of Conservation was submitted in an amount of up to \$182,366, with match funding of \$45,330 for a total estimated project amount of \$227,696. RMA proposes to match funds in the form of staffing and miscellaneous ancillary operating expenses, such as interpreting services, printing, mailing, and postage. Staff will return to the Board through the Budget Committee to request an increase in appropriations (if needed) and an increase in revenues once the work program has been development. There is no anticipated negative impact to the General Fund as a result of supporting the Ag Land Trust.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The preservation of agricultural land is encouraged to cohesively protect prime and unique

farmlands in accordance with the 2010 General Plan adopted October 26, 2010, Greater Salinas Area Plan Supplemental Policies, Policy GS-6.1, which states,

In recognition of the limitations of using Williamson Act contracts to preserve farmlands, efforts by landowners to acquire the benefits derived by donating development rights to a duly established Farmland Trust or other qualified organization which meets the criteria of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, shall be encouraged.

Through the SALC Grant program, protection of these valuable lands is further achieved to increase the economic viability of agriculture in Monterey County.

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

Prepared by: Jacqueline R. Onciano, RMA Chief of Planning
Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:
Attachment A - Vicinity Maps - Thompson Farm, Silverlake Ranch, Martella Ranch, Daugherty Ranch and Marihart Ranch
Attachment B - Resolution of Support for Thompson Farm
Attachment C - Resolution of Support for Silverlake Ranch
Attachment D - Resolution of Support for Martella Ranch
Attachment E - Resolution of Support for Daugherty Ranch
Attachment F - Resolution of Support for Marihart Ranch

cc: Front Counter Copy; Carl Holm; John Guertin, Jacqueline R. Onciano; Nadia Amador; Christina McGinnis, Agricultural Commissioner; Mary Grace Perry, Office of the County Counsel; Thompson Farm - EMD, Inc. and William O. Garin Family Limited Partnership; Silverlake Ranch - Michael D. Cling TR ET AL (David Gill); Martella Ranch - Lone Oak Land Company LLC ET AL (Steven H. Gill); Daugherty Ranch - Roberta Jean Garin ET AL (Robert Garin); Marihart Ranch - David & Susan Gill TRS& Michael D. Cling TR; Ag Land Trust (Sherwood Darington); The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Michael DeLapa, Executive Director); John H. Farrow; Janet Brennan; Project File REF160008 & REF170016