



**COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
COUNTY OF MONTEREY**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2016
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Natural Resources Conservation Service Request – Soberanes Fire

Federal, State and local agencies are coordinating efforts to evaluate conditions and potential hazards in the aftermath of the Soberanes Fire in the Carmel Highlands and Big Sur area. County staff from the Resource Management Agency conferred with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on August 11, 2016. These discussions were the beginning of an assessment of needs and opportunities to help residents prepare for upcoming winter storms in the burn area, as well as other potential sites located downstream from the burn area.

The NRCS is a Federal agency that assists property owners to identify and design projects intended to eliminate slope instability and erosion hazards for the protection of life and property at no cost to the owner. Plans prepared by NRCS are presented to the owner who can submit them to the County for permits. NRCS has an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program that can provide grant funds for 75% of the project construction costs. EWP funds were available to assist property owners after the Basin Complex Fire in 2008 and Pfeiffer Fire in 2013. The County successfully implemented a program to utilize those funds. Consistent with the process followed after the Basin Complex and Pfeiffer Fires, it is anticipated that property owners participating in the EWP Program will be required to provide a 25% funding match through an agreement with the County. At this juncture, NRCS staff cannot identify the level of grant financing that may be available to Monterey County under this program, but urged that the County move expeditiously to secure grant funds competitively available on a statewide basis.

NRCS staff advised that we submit a request letter to initiate the grant application process. Accordingly, I have transmitted the attached letter to the NRCS State Conservationist, Mr. Carlos Suarez. Submittal of this letter by itself does not commit the County to entering into a grant agreement. Over the next couple of weeks or so, NRCS and County staff intend to visit several proposed project sites impacted by the Soberanes Fire and develop a proposed project list that includes all approved NRCS project sites within the affected areas. Following this process, we will advise your Board regarding the viability of the program, and as appropriate may request authority to enter into a grant agreement with the NRCS.

Attachment

MONTEREY COUNTY



COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

LEW C. BAUMAN
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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Via Facsimile and U.S. Mail

August 18, 2016

Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist
Richard E. Lyng USDA Service Center
430 G Street #4164
Davis, CA 95616-4164
Fax: (530) 792-5790

Re: Soberanes Fire - Emergency Proclamation


Dear Mr. Suarez:

Please accept this request for Federal assistance under provisions of Section 403, Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, to provide for various slope stability, debris removal, erosion control, and canyon clearance projects within Monterey County. We believe that these projects support protection of life and property in the aftermath of the above referenced emergency proclamation. If these projects are not completed, we believe there is significant potential for emergency situations and serious damage from debris flows originating in the areas destroyed by the Soberanes Fire in Monterey County.

As local sponsors of an Emergency Watershed Protection project, we understand local responsibilities will include acquiring necessary right-of-way and permits to construct, and, if required, to operate and maintain the proposed watershed protection measures. We also understand that there is a 25 percent (25%) local cost-share for construction work, which includes engineering, survey, and inspection.

If you need additional information regarding this request, please contact Tom Moss at 831-755-5847, Monterey County Resource Management Agency–Environmental Services, 168 W. Alisal St., 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93901 or Ms. Sherrie Collins at 831-796-1900, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services, 1322 Natividad Road, Salinas, CA 93906.

Sincerely,



Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer

cc: Sherrie Collins, Carl Holm, John Guertin, Benny Young, Enrique Saavedra, Tom Moss