



Monterey County

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Board Report

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**REF160008 - The County of Monterey and Thompson Farm (Ag Land Trust)
Agricultural Land Mitigation Program and Agricultural Conservation Easement Project
Grant**

Adopt a resolution to ratify the action by the Monterey County Resource Management Agency (RMA) Director to submit a grant application to the State Department of Conservation in an amount of up to \$182,366, with the County matching 20% or \$45,330 (cash match not to exceed \$12,183 and in-kind match of approximately \$33,147), to provide funding for the development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program in the non-coastal areas of Monterey County.

Proposed CEQA Action: The activity is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to:

- a. Find the activity is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Code of Regulations (CCR) Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines;
- b. Ratify the action by the Monterey County Resource Management Agency Director to submit a grant application to the State of California Department of Conservation (DoC) in an amount up to \$182,366 with the County matching 20% or \$45,330 (cash match not to exceed \$12,183 and in-kind match of approximately \$33,147) to provide funding for the development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program (Attachment 1) and adopt DoC Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) Grant Program language;
- c. Direct the Resource Management Agency Director, or designee, to collaborate with the Ag Land Trust in the grant application process.

SUMMARY:

On May 2, 2016, County of Monterey RMA-Planning submitted a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) grant application to the State of California Department of Conservation (DoC) in an amount up to \$182,366 to provide funding for the development of the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program, in order to implement 2010 General Plan Policy No. AG-1.12, which requires preparation, adoption and implementation of a program that requires projects involving a change of land use designation resulting in the loss of Important Farmland (as mapped by the DoC Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program) to mitigate the loss of that acreage. The County proposes to match funding in an amount up to \$45,330, for a total

estimated project amount of \$227,700.

The cash match of \$12,813 would be met by incurring outside services, such as interpreting, printing, mailing and postage. If the grant is awarded, RMA anticipates absorbing the cash match within the FY2016-17 adopted Planning budget. Staff will work closely with the County Administrative Office if additional appropriations are required to cover the cash match. The remaining in-kind match of \$33,147 would be met with staff time already included in the FY2016-17 Planning Budget. The SALC Grant Program requires a minimum 10% match, with at least 5% of the requested grant amount in cash match and 5% in-kind. The county submitted the grant application proposing a 20% match in order to increase the likelihood of receiving the grant.

The goal of the SALC program is to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the protection of agricultural land resources via the purchase of agricultural conservation easements or by enacting local strategies that result in permanent agricultural land protection. In order to be considered for the grant to fund the development of Agricultural Land Mitigation Program, the County has to partner with a non-profit agency to place agricultural property into an Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE). 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, two miles west of the City limits of Salinas in Monterey County (APN Nos. 227-063-004-000 and 414-012-001-000) into an ACE. The subject property is owned by EMD, Inc and William O. Garin Family Limited Partnership, also known as the “Thompson Farm”, who are willing land owners in support of placing the 129.42 acre agricultural parcel into an ACE. If awarded the grant, the County could receive up to \$182,366 towards the preparation, adoption, and implementation of an Agricultural Land Mitigation Program. The ACE portion of the grant has its own budget (i.e. for the Ag Land Trust). Therefore, if the County is awarded the monies, the funding of up to \$182,366 will not be used to purchase the ACE. However, staff time for working with the Ag Land Trust to advance the ACE project, may be billed to the County’s grant.

For lack of timing and in order to be considered for this grant opportunity, RMA-Planning submitted their application on the date of application deadline to the DoC, prior to Board approval. A memorandum explaining this action was distributed to the Board of Supervisors on June 10, 2016. At this time, staff requests that the Board ratify the action by the Monterey County Resource Management Agency Director to submit a grant application to the DoC.

This report has the following attachments for your review:

1. Draft Resolution with Exhibit 1.
2. California’s Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program fact sheet.
3. Grant Application as submitted on May 2, 2016.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Agricultural Commissioner’s Office collaborated in the completion of the County of Monterey and Thompson Farm (AG Land Trust) Agricultural Land Mitigation Program and

Agricultural Conservation Easement Project Grant Application.

FINANCING:

There is no additional negative impact to the General Fund as a result of receiving this grant. Staff cost associated with General Plan Implementation are budgeted for under each department's adopted budgets. General Plan Implementation funding was designated only for outside consultant support. The \$182,366 in grant funds will reimburse the County's General Fund for staff cost as a result of this project over the next two years.

RMA anticipates absorbing the cash match within the FY2016-17 adopted Planning budget. Staff will work closely with the County Administrative Office if the need arises to return to the Board for additional appropriations to meet the cash match. The cash match will be met by procuring interpretation, printing, mailing and postage services.

The project period for this grant is expected to carry over into FY2017-18, not to exceed a two year period in accordance with California Sustainable Agricultural lands Conservation Program.

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Reviewed by: Jacqueline R. Onciano, Planning Services Manager
Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

- Attachment 1 - Draft Resolution with Exhibit 1.
- Attachment 2 - California's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program fact sheet.
- Attachment 3 - Grant Application as submitted on May 2, 2016.

cc: Front Counter Copy; Jacqueline R. Onciano, RMA Services Manager; Thompson Farm; AG Land Trust; Christina McGinnis, Agricultural Commissioner; Mary Grace Perry, Office of the County Counsel; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch; John H. Farrow; Janet Brennan; Project File REF160008.