



County of Monterey

Item No.3

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Matter Type: General Agenda Item

- a. Receive a presentation from Monterey Bay Fisheries; and
- b. Consider providing support to Monterey Bay Fisheries for their funding request to the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Economic Development Committee:

- a. Receive a presentation from Monterey Bay Fisheries; and
- b. Consider providing support to Monterey Bay Fisheries for their funding request to the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust (MBFT) is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to sustainable fisheries, resilient communities, and a healthy ocean. A trusted ally to the fishing community and regional food relief groups, MBFT promotes local and sustainable seafood production, supports vulnerable populations through seafood donations, and strengthens the local fishing economy. By providing tools, resources, and technical assistance, MBFT supports fishermen, harbors, and seafood businesses essential to our maritime heritage and economic health.

Monterey Bay's once-thriving seafood economy- one of the most iconic in the nation-is at a tipping point. Climate-driven fishery disasters, shifting regulations, and economic pressures threaten the future of local seafood, jobs, and coastal livelihoods in the region. Recognizing this fact, MBFT has set out with an ambitious plan to transform working waterfronts by 2030 through The Future of Blue Initiative. The Future of Blue is a partnership between Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust and Regenerative California, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supercharging regional economies through cross-sector collaboration to design and implement projects to drive system-level change. This initiative plans to bring together fishery participants, seafood businesses, local government leaders, marine science and conservation institutions, food system groups, and citizens to realize a positive future for working waterfronts.

MBFT is requesting \$170,000 from the Board of Supervisors to fund this project. The funding request represents half of the total project budget for 2026. To date, MBFT has received \$80,000 in seed funding from the Community Foundation of Monterey County, Monterey Bay Aquarium's Conservation and Science program, and Resources Legacy Fund. These funds, in addition to over \$40,000 in kind contributions from MBFT and Regenerative California, are supporting the planning and research phase of the initiative currently underway. MBFT intends to match the County's support with additional philanthropic and grant funding for the remainder of the budget needed.

Monterey County's 3-5-year Blue Economy Investment Plan aims to modernize climate-resilient infrastructure, create jobs through workforce development, reduce business vacancies, and boost tourism revenue. It projects increase fish landings, enhanced community access to local seafood, and growth in marine research and technology through attracted R&D investment and new startups. The plan measures success by public /private investment returns, job creation costs, commercial lease income, Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and visitor spending, harbor revenue, and the volume/value of active fishing permits.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel has reviewed this staff report.

FINANCING:

Receiving this report does not impact the County budget.

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Attachments:

Monterey Bay Fisheries Letters of Support

Monterey Bay Fisheries Project Overview