



Monterey County

Item No.

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: 20-539

July 14, 2020

Introduced: 6/24/2020

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

- a. Receive an update report on Defensible Space
- b. Provide direction to staff

Board Referral No: 2019.01

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors

- a. Receive an update report on Defensible Space
- b. Provide direction to staff

SUMMARY:

Referral to: **Update the Board of Supervisors on County, Regional, and State actions and regulations addressing defensible space and fire fuel reduction on private property.**

Monterey County has a history of major wildfires which have burned hundreds of thousands of acres and hundreds of structures. It is a primary County objective to reduce the potential for future wildfires.

In May 2019, staff from the county Resource Management Agency (RMA), Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC), and CALFIRE presented a report to the Board about regulations that govern fire fuel reduction for defensible space on private property. The report highlighted how both County staff and the public are often challenged by the many federal, state, and local regulations governing fire fuel management on private property. These regulations are oftentimes not consistent and sometimes in conflict with each other. After the presentation, the Board directed staff to return in the future with an update as to how RMA has updated its website concerning fire fuel modifications and defensible space. The Board also asked RMA to consider changes to its Fire Prevention Policies in its long-range planning program, specifically the Big Sur Land Use Plan Update. Finally, the Board directed the Board Legislative Committee to make Fire Prevention a priority in the County's legislative agenda. The purpose of this report is to report back on County, RCD, and CALFIRE activities since the spring of 2019.

Recommendations

- Continue to include fire mitigation and defensible space in County's legislative agenda.
- Prioritize consideration of defensible space issues in Big Sur LUP update discussions with LUAC and Coastal Commission staff.
- Continue to support RCDMC as an appropriate entity to provide project coordination, mapping, and pursuing opportunities to implement defensible space projects. While in Fiscal Year 2020/21, RMA did not receive an augmentation to support RCDMC with funding,

consider providing such funding in future fiscal years to leverage investments in grant writing and administration of fire mitigation program activities that are not covered by the grants RCDMC has obtained.

- Work with RCDMC, the Fire Safe Council, and local fire districts to provide support to HOAs, ROAs, and similar neighborhood scale efforts to improve fire preparedness.
- Coordinate with OES on Hazard Mitigation Plan on fire issues and projects for inclusion, ensure input is gathered from RCD, FFMP, Fire Safe Council, and Fire Districts.
- Return to the Board for future discussion of findings of LAFCO review of fire districts and recommendations.

DISCUSSION

A detailed discussion is attached as **Exhibit A**

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

RMA-Planning

Resource Management District of Monterey County

CALFIRE

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:

Funding for staff time associated with bringing this resolution to the Board is included in the FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 Adopted Budgets for RMA-Planning, Fund 001, Appropriation Unit RMA001 (changed to RMA110 in FY2020-21). The Board of Supervisors approved a \$150,000 contract with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County to provide staff and services to address a wide range of fire fuel mitigation issues and objectives. This contract was fully expended in FY2019-20.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVE:

This action represents the next step in establishing robust policies regarding regulations that govern fire fuel reduction for defensible space on private property through vegetation removal. These policies will protect residents of Monterey County while balancing the intent of current land use policies surrounding scenic resources and habitat. This action benefits the safety, health, and well-being of Monterey County residents, while also allowing for thoughtful management of natural resources in accordance with adopted regulations.

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

Economic Development

Administration

Health & Human Services

Infrastructure

Public Safety

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Development

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director



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

Exhibit A- Detailed Discussion of Defensible Space

Attachment A- Defensible Space RMA website information.

Attachment B- Letter from Monterey County Fire Safe Council

Attachment C- Public Resources Code 4291.