



County of Monterey

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

Board Report

File #: 14-869, **Version:** 1

Consider directing the County Administrative Officer to negotiate and prepare a funding agreement for consideration and approval of the Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency and County of Monterey to provide funds in the amount of \$1,500,000 annually for five (5) years to: 1) perform Salinas River stream maintenance activities; and, 2) prepare environmental documentation for the development of the Salinas River Management Program. (ADDED VIA ADDENDUM)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors:

Direct the County Administrative Officer to negotiate and prepare a funding agreement for consideration and approval of the Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency and County of Monterey to provide funds in the amount of \$1,500,000 annually for five (5) years to: 1) perform Salinas River stream maintenance activities; and, 2) prepare environmental documentation for the development of the Salinas River Management Program.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

November 2012 - Agency staff, Board of Directors (BOD), and public participated in a Strategic Planning Workshop where it was acknowledged that a new paradigm for channel maintenance was needed.

September 30, 2013 - BOD directed staff to work with stakeholders to modify the project in the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SRSMP) EIR. Stakeholder meetings were held between October 2013 and April 2014.

April 8, 2014 - Joint BOD and Agency Board of Supervisors (WRABOS) received an update and directed staff to prepare a budget request to the County Board of Supervisors (BOS).

The Agency continues to move forward with the development of the SRSMP, which is a viable project for channel maintenance, with the goal being a certified EIR in the very near future. Once the EIR is certified, there will be additional work to be done to obtain the necessary permits for channel maintenance work to be performed.

The SRSMP has been called the “Short-Term Program”, meaning that this program will be in place while the Agency and consultants develop a “Long-Term” Salinas River Management Program (SRMP). The SRSMP will require more work to be done by Agency staff (or consultants) than previous channel maintenance efforts, including some modeling work, and pre-project and post-project monitoring that will cause additional drains on already-limited Agency staff resources. The current Agency budget does not provide resources for these additional tasks and efforts.

The new “Long-Term” program, the SRMP, will expand beyond current channel maintenance efforts, resulting in a more ‘holistic’ approach to river management, that would include protection of infrastructure (municipal,

industrial, agricultural and transportation) as well as measures to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and fish passage.

Agency staff held a series of public meetings to gather stakeholder input on how a long-term river management program could be initiated and what it could look like. Several meetings were held between October and December 2013 with stakeholder groups, and a series of public meetings held in King City, Soledad and Salinas.

Since the Agency budget for next fiscal year cannot accommodate the additional channel maintenance efforts, or the initiation of the SRMP, a request is being made to the BOS for resources to: 1) perform the additional work required by the project in the SRSMP EIR (once appropriate permits are obtained), and 2) initiate the process of developing a SRMP, which is expected to result in a holistic, multi-benefit management program to the Salinas River. In other words, the Agency is “moving from channel maintenance to river management.”

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel has been consulted concerning this request for County funding.

FINANCING:

Water Resources Agency Staff has evaluated the resources needed to initiate and develop a SRMP and is requesting \$1,500,000 a year for five years to be distributed in the following manner: 1) \$500,000 for staff / consultants performing the additional tasks related to channel maintenance, and 2) \$1,000,000 for a consultant to develop and complete an EIR. These costs include resources for a dedicated contracted person to focus on this effort. The contracted person would manage all the channel-related efforts, provide updates to the governing bodies, manage the day-to-day staff activities supporting the development of an EIR, and other duties as the process progresses.

The County may enter into an agreement with the Agency to provide funding for the purposes of preparing the EIR, the contract consultant overseeing the EIR preparation, and the maintenance activities based upon the following benefits to the County:

- A. The Salinas River is the life-blood for residents and businesses of Monterey County.
- B. Mitigating flooding of the Salinas River in the Salinas Valley (Valley) has been, and continues to be, a region-wide matter of great importance to the residents and businesses of Monterey County.
- C. Salinas River flooding in 1995 brought about an awareness that resulted in the Agency partnering with local stakeholder groups to administer a Channel Maintenance Program that provided for landowners to perform channel maintenance tasks on their respective property.
- D. The Channel Maintenance Program was dependent on permits from the Army Corps of Engineers; however, the last permit was issued in 2008.

The funding agreement with the County would provide for the repayment of all or part of the funds, should funding for preparation of the EIR become available. Staff will continue to explore alternative funding options.

Agency Staff has been advised the Monterey County General Fund would be impacted and require reduction in other programs to fund this request.

Prepared by:

Robert Johnson, Assistant General Manager, (831) 755-4860

Approved by:

David E. Chardavoyne, General Manager, (831) 755-4860

Attachments:

Resolution

Task List and Budget