



County of Monterey

Item No.1

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 on the activities of the Monterey Bay Area Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG); and
- b. Consider recommending the Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution affirming the Board of Supervisor's intention to commit to funding the County's contribution for the RCPWG for two (2) additional years (through FY 2027-2028), for an annual contribution of \$30,000 and a total contribution of \$60,000; and
- c. Recommend that the County Administrative Officer, or designee, be authorized to enter into the MOU as a voting member of the Regional Climate Project Working Group; and,
- d. Provide direction to staff as needed.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Alternative Energy and Environment Committee:

- a. Receive a presentation on the activities of the Monterey Bay Area Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG); and
- b. Consider recommending the Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution affirming the Board of Supervisor's intention to commit to funding the County's contribution for the RCPWG for two (2) additional years (through FY 2027-2028), for an annual contribution of \$30,000 and a total contribution of \$60,000; and
- c. Recommend the County Administrative Officer, or designee, be authorized to enter into the MOU as a voting member of the Regional Climate Project Working Group; and,
- d. Provide direction to staff as needed.

SUMMARY:

The Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG) was formed in 2022 with the mission to collaborate among groups and organizations in the Monterey Bay Area region, including organizations within Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties, to develop, prioritize, secure funding for, and effectively and equitably advocate for and implement regionally beneficial climate mitigation and adaptation projects and programs. The RCPWG membership is currently composed of staff from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, the Cities of Capitola, Salinas, Santa Cruz, and Watsonville, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).

The RCPWG is working to formalize its structure by establishing a Memorandum of Agreement among participating agencies that will clarify membership roles and dues. The County is a founding member of the RCPWG and has participated in RCPWG grant awards totaling over \$33 million since 2022. Staff recommends that this committee recommend the Board of Supervisors to enter into the MOU as a voting member of the RCPWG.

DISCUSSION:

Climate change is a priority issue for organizations across the Monterey Bay Area region, encompassing Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties. A focused and organized approach to accessing State and federal sustainability and resilience funding and resources is required to bring the region together to collectively and equitably achieve climate targets and resilience outcomes. Access to large scale transformative grant opportunities has the potential to accelerate implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects and programs across the three-county region. To this end, the Monterey Bay Area Regional Climate Project Working Group (RCPWG) was formed in 2022 to collaborate and access transformative funding opportunities to achieve the region's climate and resilience goals. The RCPWG has led the development of projects and grant applications and has been successfully awarded over \$33 million since 2022. The County is a founding member of the RCPWG and the Sustainability Program Manager currently serves as vice chair on the RCPWG Strategy Team.

The mission of the RCPWG is to collaborate among groups and organizations in the Monterey Bay Area region, including organizations within Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties, to develop, prioritize, secure funding for, and effectively and equitably advocate for and implement regionally beneficial climate mitigation and adaptation projects and programs. The RCPWG membership is currently composed of staff from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, the Cities of Capitola, Salinas, Santa Cruz, and Watsonville, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). Each member agency provides annual contributions to support the activities of the RCPWG, particularly to hire grant writing consultants to develop regional and multi-jurisdictional grant applications. The cities of Marina and Monterey have recently adopted resolutions to join the RCPWG as formal dues-paying members, and the cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Hollister, and Seaside, among other jurisdictions, continue to participate in the RCPWG as non-voting observers.

The RCPWG adopted an interim charter in February 2023 to establish its initial governance structure and allow the group to pursue funding for the region while continuing to build its membership and relationships with social and environmental justice community-based organizations (CBOs).

RCPWG Activities

The RCPWG recognizes the importance of pursuing large regional grants for decarbonization and climate resilience by working collaboratively as a region, both to overcome individual capacity constraints and compete with larger, better-resourced metropolitan regions. Members of the RCPWG benefit from learning about grant opportunities, jointly developing competitive grant proposals, and accessing an established network of consulting and CBO partners that can lead and contribute to the development of grants and implementation of projects that address climate change in the region.

One or more representative(s) from each member agency participates in the RCPWG's Strategy Team meetings to discuss RCPWG administration and upcoming grant opportunities. Additionally, the RCPWG Chair and Vice Chair meet with the Managing Consultant, as needed, to discuss consultant contract obligations, agendas for upcoming meetings, the status of secured grant-funded projects, and strategies to pursue new grant funding opportunities. The primary activities of RCPWG members

include:

- Share knowledge of grant opportunities and project updates across jurisdictions,
- Scope projects and design roles in grant applications and other funding proposals,
- Participate in grant-funded roles and projects,
- Evaluate grant application preparation and project execution process,
- Attend one call every six weeks, or as needed, to discuss RCPWG operations and grant opportunities,
- Hire and manage consultants,
- Collectively decide which grants to pursue and how to pursue them, and
- Support ongoing discussions of governance for RCPWG and equity considerations.

As described in the charter, the RCPWG uses consent-based decision-making with respect to:

- The RCPWG's annual budget and work plan funded by member contributions,
- What grants the RCPWG pursues,
- Which advisors to invite to participate in discussions (including regional agencies, nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, or tribal organizations/governments),
- Subcommittee formation, and
- Membership and Leadership.

Since 2022, the RCPWG has been awarded the following grants:

- \$15,713,981 award from the CA Air Resources Board to pioneer the Monterey Bay Municipal Fleet Electrification and Workforce Accelerator with member jurisdictions.
- \$14,346,751 award from the U.S. Department of Transportation to install 6 solar/battery microgrids and 252 public EV chargers in “disadvantaged” and low-income communities and implement workforce training. While RCPWG's application was awarded, disbursement has been paused due to federal administration changes.
- \$2 million award from the Department of Energy (DOE) for residential decarbonization, electrification, and weatherization improvements.
- \$649,335 award from the CA Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) to develop the Monterey Bay Area Climate Adaptation and Resilience Implementation and Funding Roadmap.
- \$250,000 award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to secure funding to implement priority projects identified in the Monterey Bay Area Climate Adaptation and Resilience Implementation and Funding Roadmap.
- \$100,000 award from Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) to develop RCPWG's interim charter and an initial grant strategy and to support grant writing for electrification-focused funding proposals.
- \$15,000 award from the Urban Sustainability Directors' Network (USDN) to explore governance options and develop strategies for engaging community-based organizations.

Governance Development

The RCPWG secured a grant from the California Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovations’ Regional Resilience Grant Program in 2024, which includes formalizing the governance of the RCPWG by creating a new joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and updating the interim charter. The MOU (see Attachment: RCPWG Memorandum of Understanding) and revised charter (see Attachment: RCPWG Charter) aim to establish necessary administrative and governance structures to promote a cooperative regional partnership for ensuring successful and sustainable execution of RCPWG activities.

The MOU defines and formalizes the RCPWG’s membership and dues structure, annual contribution levels for current members, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments’ role as RCPWG’s Fiscal Sponsor, as well as payment terms, amendment processes, and compliance with relevant California state laws. The revised charter defines and formalizes the RCPWG’s membership categories, leadership structure, decision-making processes, annual budget and work plan development process, subcommittees, and meetings.

The Sustainability Program Manager will represent the County on the RCPWG Strategy Team and keep this committee advised on progress of the RCPWG to increase the RCPWG’s inclusivity, capacity, and continued success in securing grant funding.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Sustainability Program acts as the primary liaison between the RCPWG and County departments. The RCPWG membership is currently composed of staff from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, the Cities of Capitola, Salinas, Santa Cruz, and Watsonville, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). The cities of Marina and Monterey have recently adopted resolutions to join the RCPWG as formal dues-paying members, and the cities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Hollister, and Seaside, among other jurisdictions, continue to participate in the RCPWG as non-voting observers.

FINANCING:

The County of Monterey has paid dues of \$30,000 annually since 2022 as a voting member of RCPWG. The MOU formalizes this commitment for FY 26-27 and FY 27-28. This item has no budgetary impact at this time because FY 26-27 are included in the adopted budget. Through this membership, the County has participated in grant awards of over \$30 million.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Attachments:

Draft Resolution RCPWG

RCPWG Charter

RCPWG Memorandum of Understanding