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Title: Staff is requesting that the Climate Action Committee (CAC) sign a Letter of Support for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service applications by Napa Resource Conservation District (RCD).

Sponsors: Board of Supervisors

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Attachments: 1. USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Notice of Funding Opportunitypdf.pdf, 2. Talking Points_Letters of Support.pdf, 3. Napa RCD USFS UCF Letter of Support Template.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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TO: Napa County Climate Action Committee

FROM: David Morrison, Interim County Executive Officer

REPORT BY: Ryan Melendez, Sustainability Planner

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Napa Resource Conservation District (RCD) application for funding opportunity by the USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry through the Inflation Reduction Act

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting that the Climate Action Committee (CAC) sign a Letter of Support for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service applications by Napa Resource Conservation District (RCD).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Napa RCD will be applying for Inflation Reduction Act funding through the USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry for their “Our Napa Forests: Growing an Equitable Tree Canopy Through Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration” project. As a part of the application process, staff requests that the CAC authorize the Chair to sign the attached letter. This letter does not make any commitments on the part of the CAC or its member jurisdictions.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

This discussion arose from a request by Napa RCD to send a letter to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the grant application for the Napa RCD “Our Napa Forests: Growing an Equitable Tree Canopy Through Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration” project for the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban and Community Forest funding opportunity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS), through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), may provide up to \$1 billion for Urban and Community Forestry investments through this opportunity (based on availability of funding, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations). Funding agreements will be for a period of 5 years. All activities and expenses must be completed within this 5-year period. Recipients will be expected to implement and demonstrate measurable progress within 12 months of award. Project funding awards will range from a minimum of \$100,000 to \$50 million.

State and local government entities; agency or government entity of an insular area (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977); federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations/villages, and Tribal organizations as defined in 24 USC 5304 (I) and operating within the U.S. and its territories; non-profit organizations; public and state-controlled institutions of higher education; and community based organizations are eligible to apply. Applicants that include contributing partners must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner(s).” Partner organizations from disadvantaged communities must be full partners in the project. A letter of commitment is required to be submitted by each contributing partner.

Projects must be conducted on non-Federal lands such as: state and local government, homeowner associations, private lands, and Tribal/Alaska native corporation (includes Trust lands). Lands owned or administered by the federal government are not eligible for this funding opportunity except for lands held in trust for Native American Tribes and individuals (hereinafter Trust lands).

Napa RCD proposes to focus on growing equitable tree canopy across Napa County’s urban forests by: (1) increasing healthy tree canopy in urban and community spaces through strategic planting and active stewardship, (2) educating and empowering community members to become urban forest stewards, and (3) facilitating workforce development and career pathways in urban forestry.

The proposed project will prioritize activities that benefit disadvantaged communities, such as planting and stewardship in disadvantaged neighborhoods or publicly accessible parks and green spaces, plant giveaways, and inclusive community education and workforce development. This project seeks to maximize community benefit by collaborating across jurisdictional boundaries, facilitating the sharing of resources and existing expertise as well as laying the foundation for sustained longer-term collaboration at a landscape scale.

The deadline to apply for the USDA Urban and Community Forestry funding opportunity is June 1, 2023.

Napa RCD and LACO Associates staff are putting together this grant application. Staff requests that the CAC authorize the Chair to sign the attached letter. This letter does not represent an endorsement by any member jurisdictions. It only shows support by the CAC to Napa RCD for the USDA FS funding opportunity so that an application may be submitted.