



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2020-1204, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Administrator's Office  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Yvonne Shu, 565-1739  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** All

**Title:**

Authorization for County staff to submit Notices of Intent to apply for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (DR-4558) and Receive Update on the Resiliency Set Aside for Grant Match Requirements

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Authorize County staff to submit Notices of Intent (NOI) to apply for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for DR-4558, funding appropriated in part due to the Sonoma-Lake-Napa (LNU) Lightning Complex Fires.
- B) Authorize County staff to submit an NOI for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program DR-4558, as part of a potential partnership with Sonoma Clean Power, contingent on further program due diligence and partnership arrangements.
- C) Receive update on the Resiliency Set Aside for grant match requirements.

**Executive Summary:**

In late September 2020, FEMA appropriated HMGP funding (DR-4558) in the aftermath of the California wildfires that simultaneously erupted across northern California in August, including the LNU Lightning Complex Fires. The NOI for this round of HMGP funding is due November 20, 2020, and upon approval by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the full application is due March 5, 2021. Six NOI's are being proposed by County departments.

Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) has asked to partner with the County and apply for this same round of HMGP funding. As proposed, the County would submit the NOI, and if the partnership is finalized and funds awarded, SCP would be lead for executing the project. The proposed project would provide backup battery storage and other energy resiliency systems at approximately 30 municipal, school district, and potential other facilities that have existing solar photovoltaics systems. They are seeking \$50 million in grant funding.

The current balance of the Resiliency Set Aside for disaster recovery grant matching is \$1,634,550, assuming all 2017 HMGP projects are approved. Currently, five applications for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program are being developed. With the six proposed NOI's for the most recent HMGP funding (excluding the SCP project), the County will need to identify \$13.5 million in funding for the required match requirements, should all BRIC and HMGP projects receive FEMA funding.

**Discussion:**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) helps communities implement hazard mitigation activities following a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. HMGP funding is used to provide protection to undamaged parts of a facility or to prevent or reduce damages caused by future disasters. HMGP is managed by the State under funding provided for in the Stafford Act. The entire state - not just presidentially declared counties - may qualify for HMGP mitigation projects. The State receives a percentage of the total federal share of the declared disaster damage amount, which it uses to fund projects anywhere in the State, regardless of where the declared disaster occurred or the disaster type. The cost share for HMGP is 75% federal with a 25% non-federal (typically County) match.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply for HMGP funding is the preliminary, non-binding indication of an organization's intent to submit a full grant application. The NOI deadline for this round of HMGP funding is November 20, 2020. Should Cal OES approve an applicant's NOI, the full application is due March 5, 2021.

A) County departments and agencies are preparing to submit six NOI's for County projects and programs; below are brief descriptions of each. Note that these descriptions are preliminary, and both the scope and cost of the projects are subject to change at this early stage. While multiple departments may be involved in the execution of each of these projects, including the General Services Department (GSD) and the Information Systems Department (ISD), the department submitting the NOI is listed below. The department ultimately responsible for a project may be subject to change, once funding is received. Further due diligence will be conducted on all proposed projects and programs, including, but not limited to, feasibility analysis, program criteria optimization, and coordination with other capital and other resiliency efforts.

1. Department of Emergency Management (DEM): Repeater Stations for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Radio Alert System. This project entails installation of repeater stations to increase radio signal in geographically-isolated areas of the county, e.g., Fitch Mountain, Mill Creek, and distribution of up to 50 radios per repeater to constituents living in these communities. Project estimate: \$60,000
2. DEM: Resilient Network Design. This project entails the drafting and design of a resilient network system, so that in the event of a loss of power at both the ISD data center and the Sheriff's Office building, County staff could relocate to remote sites on the County network and access applications running on the cloud. Project estimate: \$150,000
3. DEM: Sub-Regional Disaster Supplies Storage and Operational Facilities. This project involves the construction of five storage facilities, one in each of the five districts, to house response and shelter supplies. These facilities would include full utilities, solar, and battery storage. Project estimate: \$1,125,000
4. GSD: Los Guillicos Structure Demolition. In the event of a fire, the 25 vacant structures at the Los Guillicos campus pose a risk to the occupied buildings, due to potential ember casts and other fire-related damages. This project entails demolishing seven buildings destroyed in the Glass Fire, as well as the remaining 18 vacant buildings. All required environmental analysis and other regulatory review would be included. Project estimate: \$4,600,000
5. Department TBD: Advance Assistance to Evaluate Critical Facilities in West County. This project would evaluate critical facilities and unincorporated areas in West County to determine appropriate

mitigation priorities and actions, scope potential projects, and develop such projects, including engineering and design. HMGP funding would complement previously reserved funding in West County toward establishment of a resilience facility in West County. Project estimate: \$1,700,000

6. Transportation and Public Works (TPW): County Service Area (CSA) 41 Water System Improvements. This project includes new generators for the Freestone, Jenner, and Salmon Creek water systems, an automatic backwash system for Freestone, and a steel, bolted tank for Fitch Mountain.

- B) Sonoma Clean Power (SCP), a joint powers authority (JPA) that provides electricity for customers in Sonoma and Mendocino counties, has asked the County to partner on an application for an energy resiliency systems program, primarily focused on battery systems improvements. Under the proposal, the County would submit the NOI and later be the applicant, and SCP would be lead for executing the project. SCP cannot apply directly to the HMGP since it is not an eligible entity, nor does SCP have a local hazard mitigation plan, as required by HMGP. They are seeking \$50 million in grant funding. SCP would be responsible for all required local match funds (estimated to be \$12.5 million) and currently plans to obtain state funding for that local match.

The County first received SCP's proposal (Attachment 1) on October 21, 2020. Their proposed project would provide backup battery storage systems at approximately 30 (depending on final funding amounts) municipal and school district facilities that already have solar photovoltaic systems. The goal is to install batteries and other resiliency systems at locations that could provide services and shelter during grid outages. SCP is currently working with TerraVerde Energy to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of adding battery storage at multiple sites across the county. SCP has provided a preliminary list of possible locations but the final list has not been determined. Battery backup at schools would provide a place for communities to gather locally in the event of a power shut-off or disaster.

It is important to note that the three County sites listed on SCP's proposal (airport, juvenile justice center, data processing center) are already included in the Board-approved FY 2020-21 Capital Budget as sites for solar and battery storage microgrids. Staff have already invested extensive planning, feasibility analysis, budgeting and other efforts to realize these projects. To avoid duplication of effort, these three sites would not be part of the HMGP NOI or application. Further study is underway as to whether other County-owned sites (or sites owned by other agencies, such as fire districts) might be included in the HMGP program, but no site has been identified yet. Since the program focus is on sites with existing solar photovoltaic systems and the County has a limited number of such facilities, it is possible that no County-owned sites would benefit.

As the applicant, the County would be responsible for grant administration, communications, required grant reporting (including during the project and required close-out), and ensuring grant compliance by SCP and any of SCP's consultants and vendors. As with all HMGP projects, the project timeline is 36 months. An overview of grant administration responsibilities is outlined in Attachment 2.

Outstanding questions remain regarding the SCP proposal. Further due diligence with SCP is needed to understand key details of the proposal, including the following:

1. County grant oversight and "middleman" role between Cal OES and SCP, staffing requirement and time, and related reimbursement of County costs for same
2. Direct and indirect benefits (e.g, sites, local jobs, etc.) to County for being the applicant and taking

grant responsibility and management efforts

3. SCP contribution of the required local match, which would be \$12.5 million (if the grant award is \$50 million)
4. Respective roles of all consultants, sub-consultants, and project-receiving entities, related to procurement, project management, and public works and grant compliance

County staff would continue to work with SCP on these outstanding issues and other due diligence related to the proposed partnership. Should it be concluded that the partnership is feasible and able to be recommended and the NOI is approved, staff will return to your Board for decision to approve the partnership (and any applicable agreements), and for authorization to file the full HMGP application.

C) After the 2017 wildfires, the County set aside \$4 million in the Resiliency Set Aside, in anticipation of a local share requirement for disaster recovery grant funding. The cost share for HMGP and other federal grant programs is typically 75% federal and 25% non-federal match. The current balance of the Resiliency Set Aside is \$1,634,550, assuming all 2017 HMGP projects are approved.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Grant Match</b>                     | <b>\$ 4,000,000</b> |
| Creative                               | \$ 118,000          |
| <b>Awarded Projects - match amount</b> |                     |
| Radio E                                | \$ 11,000           |
| Advanc                                 | \$ 564,170          |
| Fire Ear                               | \$ 680,680          |
| Data Ce                                | \$ 164,545          |
| Operati                                | \$ 83,333           |
| Commu                                  | \$ 50,000           |
| <b>Grant Match Balance</b>             | <b>\$ 2,328,272</b> |
| HMGP                                   | \$ 693,722          |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Estimated Resiliency Set Aside Balance for Grant Match | \$ 1,634,550 |
|--|--------------|

In September 2020, County departments submitted NOI's for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communications (BRIC) program, a nationally competitive hazard mitigation funding opportunity. To date, five NOI's have been approved to be submitted as full applications; should they all receive grant funding, the required match will total \$13.1 million, of which \$12.5 million would be for Permit Sonoma's landscape-scale vegetation management, structural hardening and defensible space project, "Wildfire Resilient Sonoma County: Nature-based Mitigation to Adapt in an Era of Megafires."

The preliminary total for the grant match for the newest round of HMGP funding detailed in Section A is \$2.1 million.

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Estimated Resiliency Set Aside balance   | \$1,634,550    |
| Less estimated BRIC grant match, should all projects receive funding           | (\$13,100,000) |
| Less estimated HMGP (DR-4558) grant match, should all projects receive funding | (\$2,100,000)  |
| Grant match funding needed   | (\$13,565,450) |

The table above only summarizes current disaster recovery funding activity. Future opportunities will become available and grant matches will also be required.

**Prior Board Actions:**

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

| <b>Expenditures</b>                | <b>FY 20-21<br/>Adopted</b> | <b>FY 21-22<br/>Projected</b> | <b>FY 22-23<br/>Projected</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Budgeted Expenses                  |                             |                               |                               |
| Additional Appropriation Requested |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>          |                             |                               |                               |
| <b>Funding Sources</b>             |                             |                               |                               |
| General Fund/WA GF                 |                             |                               |                               |
| State/Federal                      |                             |                               |                               |
| Fees/Other                         |                             |                               |                               |

|                      |  |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Use of Fund Balance  |  |  |  |
| Contingencies        |  |  |  |
| <b>Total Sources</b> |  |  |  |

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

| <b>Staffing Impacts:</b>                       |  |                           |                           |
|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b> | <b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b> | <b>Additions (Number)</b> | <b>Deletions (Number)</b> |
|  |  |                           |                           |
|  |  |                           |                           |
|  |  |                           |                           |

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

**Attachments:**

1. Sonoma Clean Power HMGP Proposal
2. Cal OES HMGP Grant Administration Procedures

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**