



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-1070, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors;
Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office
Staff Name and Phone Number: Christel Querijero 565-7071
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Senate Bill 109 Flood Relief Funds

Recommended Actions:

- A) Receive an update on Senate Bill (SB) 109 Flood Relief Funds allocation including the process and criteria to select community flood relief projects.
- B) Approve the allocation of SB 109 Flood Relief Funds, authorize grants to local organizations for community flood relief projects, and authorize the County Administrator to execute grant agreements.
- C) Adopt a resolution authorizing adjustments to the County Administrator's Office (CAO) Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget in the amount of \$1,500,000 to appropriate SB 109 Flood Relief Funds allocated to the County of Sonoma for flood relief and mitigation of impacts from the 2019 Winter Storms and Flood Event with appropriations effective October 20, 2020. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

On September 27, 2019, with the signing of SB109 Budget Act of 2019, the State of California allocated \$1.5 million in flood relief for the County of Sonoma. This item provides an update to the Board on SB Senate Bill Flood Relief Fund allocation including the process and criteria to select community flood relief projects. This item also requests that the Board approve the SB 109 allocations, authorize grants to local organizations for community flood relief projects, and authorize the County Administrator to execute the grant agreements. To enable programming of funds, staff recommends that the Board adopt a resolution authorizing adjustments to the County Administrator's Office (CAO) Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget in the amount of \$1,500,000 to appropriate SB 109 Flood Relief Funds allocated to the County of Sonoma for flood relief and mitigation of impacts from the 2019 Winter Storms and Flood Event with appropriations effective October 20, 2020.

Discussion:

BACKGROUND

In February of 2019, the County experienced devastating storms prompting the worst flood disaster in almost 25 years. The Russian River ultimately crested at 45.4 feet, 13 feet above flood level, damaging or destroying over 2,500 homes and businesses. Countywide damage assessments were estimated at over \$150 million. In addition to private property damage, damages to public property including debris removal, emergency protective measures, non-federal road and bridge systems, water control facilities, public buildings, public utilities, and park and recreational facilities were estimated at over \$23.5 million. Damage estimates also included approximately \$4 million in physical agriculture damage.

County Assemblyman Jim Wood, Senator Mike McGuire, your Board and community partners successfully

advocated for the allocation of available funds toward critical 2019 Russian River flooding recovery and resiliency efforts, and on September 27, 2019, with the signing of SB109 Budget Act of 2019, the State of California allocated \$1,500,000 million in flood relief for the County of Sonoma. Funds were received by the County Treasurer on March 24, 2020.

On June 2, 2020, your Board formally accepted \$1,500,000 in SB 109 Flood Relief Funds and directed the County Administrator to work with District 4 and District 5 staff to develop recommendations for Senate Bill 109 fund allocation to address recovery efforts from the disaster impacts of the 2019 flooding.

SB 109 FUND ALLOCATION

District 4 and District 5 Supervisors and staff convened and collaborated to develop an approach to SB 109 Flood Relief Funds allocation and decided on three categories for fund allocation: 1) a community grant program, 2) the Russian River Recovery and Resilience (R4) project, and 3) the Western Emergency Resource Center (WERC).

Community Grant Projects - \$220,000

District 5 worked with the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council (River MAC) to determine priorities and develop project ideas. An assigned River MAC committee researched needs along the Lower Russian River and developed criteria for grant requests, which were discussed at several community-wide River MAC meetings. River MAC members voted unanimously in favor of the recommended project application process and criteria. The District 5 office coordinated with the River MAC and the community to assist with project development and the application process. The following criteria for project prioritization were used:

1. Emergency Services - project improves communications during disasters/emergencies, addresses first responder needs and/or neighborhood security
2. Community Resiliency - project or funding request serves as matching funds for electric vehicle (EV), solar, and/or generator projects or grants, or is a community revitalization projects in flood-damaged areas
3. Roads and Water Run-off Mitigation Projects
4. Economic Resiliency / Small Business Support

A solicitation announcing the community grants funded by SB 109 Flood Relief Funds was posted July 6, 2020 on the County of Sonoma and the River MAC websites, and was shared through Supervisor Hopkins' newsletter and social media sites. Information regarding the community grant was also shared through River MAC representative networks and emails, neighborhood associations such as Friends of Villa Grande, the Hacienda neighborhood association, Friends and Residents of Guerneville, Monte Rio and Russian River Parks and Recreation.

The application period was July 7, 2020 through July 24, 2020. Projects were selected on August 31, 2020 and the list of selected grants was announced at the Lower Russian River MAC meeting on September 14, 2020. Organizations from the Lower Russian River submitted applications for projects totaling \$728,660. Supervisor Hopkins and District 5 staff, with input from the River MAC flood mitigation funds ad hoc committee, selected 12 projects totaling \$220,000. The selected projects benefit several local communities in the Lower Russian River area: Guerneville, Monte Rio, Forestville, and Cazadero. A list of selected projects with project

descriptions is included as Attachment A to this item. Below is a list of selected projects and grant amounts.

Awardee	Project	Award Amount
Sonoma Family Meal	Senior Center Meals	\$29,839
Guerneville School	Flood Mitigation Projects / FEMA Match	\$26,848
Hacienda Improvement District	Culvert Repair on Skyline Road	\$25,000
Friends of Villa Grande	Drainage Feasibility Study	\$21,200
Russian River Chamber of Commerce	Cleaning Services for Downtown Guerneville	\$20,000
Cazadero Community Services District	Fire Station Generator	\$20,000
Pole Mountain Fire	Fire Lookout Rebuild	\$20,000
Russian River Chamber of Commerce	Downtown Guerneville Merchant Assistance	\$15,000
Cazadero Community Services District	Fire Station Fiber Connection	\$12,613
Monte Rio Recreation & Park District	Solar and Generator for Monte Rio Community Resilience Center	\$12,000
Hollydale Community Club	Community Club Generator	\$11,000
Monte Rio Recreation & Park District	Monte Rio Business Support	\$3,500
Monte Rio Recreation & Park District	Creekside Infrastructure	\$3,000

If staff recommendations are approved by the Board, awarded organizations will be required to enter into grant agreements with the County to receive SB 109 Flood Relief Funds for grant activities beginning October 20, 2020. A sample grant agreement is attached to this item as Attachment B.

Government Code Section 26227 authorizes the Board to expend County funds to support programs deemed by the Board to be necessary to meet the social needs of the population of the County, including but not limited to, areas of health, public safety, rehabilitation, welfare, education, and the needs of physically, mentally and financially handicapped persons and aged persons. By its approval, the Board finds that the grants listed above support programs necessary to meet the social needs of County residents and will provide flood relief and mitigation of impacts from the 2019 Winter Storms and Flood Event.

Russian River Recovery and Resilience (R4) Project - \$160,000

In collaboration with the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, River MAC representatives, the Russian River Chamber of Commerce, and Lower Russian River area businesses, Supervisor Hopkins and District 5 staff held a business community meeting to discuss project ideas for SB 109 Flood Relief Fund allocation. These ideas were integrated into the Russian River Recovery and Resilience (R4) project. Supervisors Gore and Hopkins agreed to make the project a joint effort between their respective districts, working with the Confluence framework and team, and with input from small businesses along the Russian River.

The Russian River Confluence was an event which brought people from all areas of the watershed together to envision the current state of the Russian River watershed and to tap the collective capacity of the Russian River Watershed community. The Russian River Confluence engaged stakeholders in the watershed, encouraged storytelling and identified actions to promote a holistic approach to a vision of a One Watershed plan that ensures its resiliency and renewal. The Confluence mission is “driving community action towards a healthy, resilient and regenerative Russian River watershed.”

The Russian River Resort area has been a vacation spot for the North Bay region and the world for more than 100 years. While this has brought great economic benefits, it also creates challenges based on overuse and poor stewardship of the area. This project’s ambitious goal is to shift the dynamic from thoughtless overuse to conscious stewardship for the benefit of all, promoting the Russian River as an environmental gem rich in natural beauty.

Drinkable • Fishable • Swimmable

These three words address more than the environmental health of the Russian River, for which restoration is critical. They also encompass the region’s economic strength and way of life. The campaign to ensure that water is drinkable, fishable, and swimmable engages visitors, local businesses, and residents as beneficiaries of the River and also as stewards.

SB 109 Flood Relief funds will be used to develop the R4 brand so that it can be used in marketing materials and for education and engagement purposes.

The R4 brand will be used to support:

- Campaigns, such as the successful “Keep Tahoe Blue” campaign, to educate and engage residents, visitors, and organizations in stewardship of the Russian River area. These may include public awareness campaigns to encourage the community to keep trash and human waste out of the River, and to contribute to clean up and restoration projects.
- Online tools to promote small businesses along the River that tie into the eco-campaign.
- Enabling virtual visits to the River and links to favorite retailers where the public can pick up or ship products that support the River economy.
- Eco-merchandising that keeps trash out of the River, promotes the area, and provides businesses with opportunities for revenue-generating sales of stickers, re-usable utensils, bags, maps on towels, for example.
- Environmental and/or clean-up projects that engage and inspire stakeholders to invest in the health of the River through volunteerism, sponsorship, education.

Western Emergency Resource Center (WERC) - \$1,120,000

The Sonoma County Fire District Station 9 in Guerneville is the region’s base for emergency response operations. However, the facility was built in 1964 of unreinforced masonry construction and its deficiencies include: outdated electrical systems; non-ADA compliant design; and poor roof condition. The firehouse does not meet the community’s needs for responding to disasters and is at the end of its useful life. Neither of the two closest stations, Monte Rio and Cazadero, pass modern seismic standards.

The County’s needs exceed the existing facility capabilities. County services are currently provided in inadequate facilities: the Guerneville Veteran’s Building, which houses the Sheriff’s substation for the area and

was obtained by the County in 1948, suffers from seismic deficiencies and differential settlement.

West County requires an Emergency Resource Center to provide on-site electricity to residents during power shutoff events, and serve as a cooling center when there are high temperatures and a warming center during code blue events. The region is also in need of a disaster response hub that includes prepositioning of emergency supplies for wildfire, flood, and earthquake preparedness, serves as a Local Assistance Center for post-disaster support, and houses an Incident Command Center to support interagency emergency management and provide a backup Emergency Operations Center should another EOC be inaccessible due to wildfire threat. A new multi-purpose fire station that meets the unique requirements of remote West County is needed to address the variety, frequency, complexity, and duration of disaster events.

Proposed Project. The WERC project would replace the Sonoma County Fire District Station 9 and serve as a new, base site for operations for firefighting, law enforcement, government services, and community convening. The WERC could serve as a Local Assistance Center, Incident Command Center, and backup Emergency Operations Center. The facility would provide electricity, cooling, gas, and broadband service for residents during power shutoffs or extreme temperatures. The WERC could house:

- Sonoma County Fire District Station 9
- County of Sonoma Sheriff's Office
- Disaster Response Hub
 - Incident Command Center to support inter-agency emergency management and to serve as backup Emergency Operations Center should another be inaccessible due to wildfire threat
 - Staging area for emergency supplies for earthquake, flood and wildfire preparedness
 - Local Assistance Center for post-disaster recovery support
- County of Sonoma Department of Health Services
 - Health and human services case management office space with support for multidisciplinary ACCESS initiative
 - Mobile support team for mental health crisis response
- County of Sonoma Probation Department
- Community Resource Center for power shut off and other events
- Meeting space for the community, including Veterans' service organizations

A WERC would directly benefit residents who have been devastated by disasters and facilitate their ability to resume their lives. The establishment of a WERC would enable local governments, private sector, and community organizations to more rapidly and effectively coordinate response, minimizing the impacts of the disaster in the community.

Cell service in West County is poor and worsens during disasters. The proposed WERC would be fitted with reliable broadband service to ensure communications with fire stations, and enable members of the public to access emergency communications. Additionally, the WERC would also provide heating and cooling for residents in need during periods of extreme temperature.

On-site production and storage of power at the WERC would allow for resilience from power loss during planned power de-energization events, or loss of power during disasters. This is crucial in providing uninterrupted emergency service to the West County area and the many residents of West County that live in remote or low-income areas. As part of facility design, appropriate power generation and storage technologies that would serve the facility on a daily basis and during disaster response would also be identified.

Supervisors Gore and Hopkins propose that \$1,120,000 of SB109 Flood Relief Funds be used to support a new Western Emergency Resource Center (WERC). Staff will be actively seeking grant and other funding support opportunities to fund the WERC project. District 5 has also set aside Redevelopment funds which, in combination with SB 109 Flood Relief Funds, could be used a potential grant match and/or to leverage other sources of funding.

NEXT STEPS

With the Board's approval of staff's recommendations, grant agreements will be executed with grant awardees. Project funds will be set aside for Russian River Recovery and Resilience (R4) Project and Western Emergency Resource Center (WERC) project expenditures.

Prior Board Actions:

6/2/20 - Board formally accepted \$1,500,000 allocated under Provision 17 of Item 9210-102-0001 of the 2019 Budget Act, as amended by Senate Bill 109 (Chapter 363, Statutes of 2019) to the County of Sonoma for flood relief and mitigation of impacts from the 2019 Winter Storms and Flood Event.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY 21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,500,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$1,500,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$1,500,000		
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,500,000		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

\$1,500,000 in SB 109 Funds have been deposited in the Non-departmental fund and account for State and Other Funding (10005-16021200-42358). The budget resolution requested for this item would program funds within the Non-departmental fund and account.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required)

Attachments:

Attachment A: SB 109 Flood Relief Community Project Grant Awardees

Attachment B: Sample Grant Agreement

Attachment C: Resolution Authorizing Budget Adjustment

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board: