



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2022-0967, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District Board of Directors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Sheri Emerson, 707-565-7358  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Adoption of 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

**Recommended Action:**

Resolution adopting the 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and determining that the plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 and Section 15061(b)(3).

**Executive Summary:**

The Federal Disaster Management Act of 2000 requires state and local governments to develop, and regularly update, hazard mitigation plans to meet federal and state hazard planning requirements and as a condition for grant assistance. In 2019, Permit Sonoma applied for and received funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to prepare an update to the 2016 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan. For this current update, Permit Sonoma partnered with local incorporated city governments and special districts within the County, including the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space), to prepare the 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). The MJHMP includes a risk and vulnerability assessment of natural hazards within the County planning area, establishes mitigation priorities and actions for risk reduction, and presents a five-year implementation and maintenance plan. The plan complies with federal and state hazard mitigation planning requirements to establish eligibility for funding under FEMA grant programs for all planning partners and will be in effect until October 13, 2026.

On September 27, 2021, the FEMA and the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) determined that the draft MJHMP is eligible for final approval pending its adoption by Sonoma County and all participating jurisdictions. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted the MJHMP on December 7, 2021. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space annex is included within Volume 2 of the adopted MJHMP. On April 19, 2022, FEMA provided notice that the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was now deemed a newly eligible jurisdiction participant in the MJHMP. As such, the Board of Directors for Ag + Open Space must adopt the MJHMP in its entirety in order for Ag + Open Space to be eligible for federal disaster funding under the plan.

Staff recommends the Board of Directors adopt in its entirety, Volume I, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District annex, and appendices of Volume II of the Sonoma County Local Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

## Discussion:

### Background

Hazard mitigation is defined by FEMA as any action taken to reduce or alleviate the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage that can result from a disaster. It involves long- and short-term actions often implemented before disasters, but also during and after. Hazard mitigation activities can include planning efforts, policy changes, programs, studies, improvement projects, and other steps to reduce the impacts of hazards. The federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 promotes proactive, pre-disaster planning. The DMA amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to require state and local governments to develop hazard mitigation plans (HMPs) as a condition for federal disaster grant assistance. Sonoma County's ability to apply for and receive future funding from FEMA is dependent on having a current, approved HMP in place. Sonoma County's current plan expires in April 2022, and adoption of a new HMP would ensure the County maintains full eligibility until October 13, 2026. FEMA is responsible for final review and approval of HMPs. CalOES is responsible for initial review of HMPs within the state and coordination of plans between FEMA and the local government.

HMPs are required to be updated every five years in order to continue to be eligible for FEMA hazard mitigation project grant funding (44 CFR §201.6(d)(3)). In 2006, Sonoma County prepared its first hazard mitigation plan in compliance with the DMA and has updated the plan every five years since, most recently in 2016. In 2019, Permit Sonoma applied for a \$333,330 planning project (75% federal, 25% local match) from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to develop the 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP).

Sonoma County partnered with local cities and special districts, including Ag + Open Space, to develop the MJHMP and fulfill DMA requirements for all participating planning partners. FEMA encourages multi-jurisdictional planning under its guidance for the DMA, in part because it provides the ability to pool resources and eliminate redundant activities within the Sonoma County planning area that has uniform risk exposure and vulnerabilities. The MJHMP guides and coordinates mitigation activities throughout the planning area and was developed to meet the following objectives:

1. Meet or exceed requirements of the DMA;
2. Enable all planning partners to continue using federal grant funding to reduce risk through mitigation;
3. Meet the needs of each planning partner as well as state and federal requirements.
4. Create a risk assessment of local hazards of concern;
5. Meet the planning requirements of FEMA's Community Rating System [\(<https://www.fema.gov/factsheet/community-rating-system>](https://www.fema.gov/factsheet/community-rating-system) (CRS), allowing eligible planning partners to consider participation in the CRS program. CRS has 1,520 communities throughout the United States that participate in the program by implementing local mitigation, floodplain management, and outreach activities that exceed the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements; and
6. Coordinate existing plans and programs so that high-priority projects to mitigate possible disaster impacts are funded and implemented.

Ag + Open Space submitted a letter of intent to participate, along with several other planning partners, and worked with Permit Sonoma staff and the County's consultant (Tetra Tech) to develop the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space annex to the plan. Ag + Open Space staff served on the 19-member

steering committee and participated in public meetings as part of the outreach for the MJHMP.

On September 27, 2021, the FEMA and the CalOES determined that the draft MJHMP was eligible for final approval pending its adoption by Sonoma County and all participating jurisdictions. The MJHMP was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 7, 2021. On April 19, 2022, FEMA provided notice that the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District is a newly eligible participating jurisdiction. This means that Ag + Open Space will be eligible to also apply for federal disaster mitigation funds upon adoption of the MJHMP by its Board of Directors.

The MJHMP is organized into three parts (the Planning Process, Risk Assessment, and Mitigation Strategy) across two volumes.

Volume 1 includes all federally required elements of a disaster mitigation plan that apply to the entire planning area. This includes the description of the planning process, public involvement strategy, goals and objectives, planning area hazard risk assessment, planning area mitigation actions, and a plan maintenance strategy.

Volume 2 includes all federally required jurisdiction-specific elements in annexes for each participating jurisdiction, including Ag + Open Space. The Ag + Open Space annex includes a jurisdiction profile and capability assessment; describes key vulnerabilities determined by the risk assessment; and identifies potential Ag + Open Space-specific mitigation actions.

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

Adoption of the MJHMP is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (feasibility and planning studies) and Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption), each on a separate and independent basis. The MJHMP identifies hazard risk and offers a mitigation strategy of possible future actions the County and planning partners may take to reduce hazard risk depending on funding and staffing availability but is not a commitment to any mitigation action, and is not a decision to approve, adopt, or fund any of the potential mitigation actions identified. Adoption of the MJHMP is also exempt from CEQA pursuant to the commonsense exemption because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that adoption of the MJHMP may have a significant effect on the environment.

### **Prior Board Actions:**

September 19, 2006: The Board of Supervisors adopted the first Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

October 25, 2011: The Board of Supervisors adopted the 2011 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan by Resolution No. 11-0582.

April 24, 2017: The Board of Supervisors adopted the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan by Resolution No. 17-0168.

September 24, 2019: The Board of Supervisors authorized the County Administrator's Office to execute two grant agreements with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, administered by the California Office of Emergency Services.

December 7, 2021: The Board of Supervisors adopted the 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan by Resolution No. 21-0494

## FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY 23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
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:

N/A

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

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

N/A

### Attachments:

1. Draft Board of Directors Resolution
2. 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Volume 1
3. 2021 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Volume 2, including the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District annex and appendices.
4. FEMA Notice to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District of its Status as a Newly Eligible Participating Jurisdiction in the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, dated April 19, 2022

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

N/A

