RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2020-586

MEETING: October 6, 2020

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer

RE: Ratify Letter of Support for Sierra Resilient Community Grant

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Ratify a Letter of Support for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Sierra Resilient Community Grant to Fund a JPA (Joint Powers Authority) Focused on Implementing Regional Forest Management.

On behalf of the five county region (Mariposa, Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador and Alpine), Tuolumne County’s Director of Innovation & Business Assistance is submitting an application to fund a JPA for a regional forest management program. Due to the severe economic impact of several years of catastrophic wildfires throughout the region, and anticipated future forest fires, there is a need for the five counties to coordinate and manage a regional plan.

In addition, this JPA would ensure consistent biomass supply, integrate a wood campus concept, remove non-merchantable material that create fire risk in our forests, and seek investment from philanthropic, forestry initiative, private sector and government organizations. Mariposa County receives many requests for biomass by wood utilizing companies and start-up companies. This JPA would provide an opportunity for these local companies to access woody biomass and create business development opportunities in Mariposa.

Given the urgent need for a regional forest management program and the short time frame of the request of the letter, staff has already sent this letter of support and recommends approval of this request to ratify that action.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board routinely approves or ratifies letters of support that it determines to be in the best interest of the county.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not approve. Staff would notify recipients of a retraction in that event.

ATTACHMENTS:
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Letter of Support_Resilient Sierra Community  (DOCX)

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor
SECONDER: Miles Menetrey, District V Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey
September 15, 2020

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Ste 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Sierra Nevada Conservancy,

Mariposa County is pleased to offer our support for Tuolumne County’s application for a Resilient Sierra Community Grant. This grant would help establish a joint powers authority focused on implementing regional forest management with sustainable environmental, social and economic drivers. We encourage your consideration of this application and look forward to implementing an award, if granted, with our neighboring counties.

Central Sierra counties from Alpine to Mariposa have experienced catastrophic impacts of drought, bark beetle infestations, tree mortality, and wildfire. Many government and environmental agencies support forest restoration as a key to reversing the negative impacts of tree mortality and unhealthy forests. Forest restoration helps rebalance ecological function and results in a healthier and more resilient forest that produces strong trees, clean air and water, enhanced wildlife habitat and improve community protection against catastrophic wildfire.

Tuolumne’s grant application proposes the development of the Natural Resources Supply Concept JPA, which would be comprised of the counties already mentioned. Our counties already work together on many issues, including economic development and wildfire prevention. Through this JPA, our counties would develop a regional forest management program that would ensure consistent biomass supply, integrate a wood campus concept, remove non-merchantable material that create fire risk in our forests, and seek investment from philanthropic, forestry initiative, private sector and government organizations.

With a dozen local emergencies over the last four years, including the two largest wildfires in our history, Mariposa County is very supportive of this project. The wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic has left us unable to contribute financially to this project now, but we
are supportive of Tuolumne County’s application for grant funds and look forward to contributing to the regional coalition for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cann, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors