



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: February 5, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution authorizing an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 68 funds for vegetation management, fire prevention and resilience activities.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing an application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant of Proposition 68 funds for vegetation management, fire prevention and resilience activities in the amount of \$2,000,000.

Background: The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) authorized general obligation bonds to address, among other things, the periodic investments needed to protect, restore, and enhance our natural resources and parks to ensure all Californians have safe, clean, and reliable drinking water, prevent pollution and disruption of our water supplies, prepare for future droughts and floods, and protect and restore our natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of our children and future generations. Proposition 68 allocated funding to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) for the Conservancy's specified purposes (Public Resources Code Section 80110(b)(8)) and for projects to protect and enhance an urban creek (Public Resources Code Section 80100(a)(1)(A)).

The MRCA operates and manages dozens of developed park sites, hundreds of individual stand-alone parcels, and thousands of acres of open space located throughout the Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Many of these parcels are adjacent to residential development, and were acquired in part to halt the negative impacts of development from spreading further into wildlands. A large percentage of MRCA-managed properties are thus on the wildland-urban interface, resulting in a huge burden of fuel removal and vegetation management each year. The systematic reduction of flash fuel vegetation directly reduces wildfire risk, protects watersheds, and promotes watershed health. Proper vegetation management gives firefighters spaces to defend structures and other resources, and has a long term benefit in making these lands more resilient after a fire.

The task of protection and restoration covered under this grant application will be performed by both MRCA staff and multiple contractors, which will allow a large amount of work to be performed in a short period of time. The cost of vegetation management continues to rise each year, for reasons including minimum wage hikes and herbicide prohibitions in some jurisdictions. Specialized suppression materials and equipment to be purchased will include, but is not limited to, chainsaws, trimmers, mowers, sprayers, and herbicides, as well as fuel for the equipment and consumable parts. Each year there are a number of large trees that require specialized arborist work to prevent structure damage and remove public safety hazards, and this work is included as well.

The subject grant funds will be targeted to properties outside of the Woolsey Fire footprint. Vegetation management within the footprint will be funded out of sources dedicated to recovery and restoration of those impacted lands.

Consideration: The request to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy will be for \$2,000,000 of Proposition 68 funds.

Fiscal Impact: If awarded, the subject reimbursable grant will need to be added to the final budget for fiscal year 2018-19. If not awarded, the necessary activities will need to be funded by the general fund and other limited maintenance funds. The intent is that the subject request would cover vegetation management until approximately June 30, 2021.