



MARIPOSA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors • 209-966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2016-23

MEETING: January 5, 2016
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor
RE: Biomass Project Letter of Support

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Approve a Letter of Support for a Mariposa Biomass Project Grant Application and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter.

The Mariposa Biomass Project is a Public Benefit Corporation, incorporated in California as a 501(c)(3). The Mariposa Biomass Project has secured funding from the U.S. Forest Service, through the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC), for a fuel availability study. The study report was accepted in early September.

The Mariposa Biomass Project is seeking funding for activities necessary to plan for the establishment of a log deck and, subsequently, a biomass facility in Mariposa. The effort funded by the grant will include completion of site control, site planning and design, acquiring required permitting, technical documentation, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and completion of a system impact study that will allow the facility to tie into the existing electrical grid. Mariposa County will bear no responsibility for compliance with the grant since the applicant will be the Mariposa Biomass Project. The fiscal agent for the effort will be the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District. Should Mariposa Biomass Project receive grant funding and proceed with the log deck, the Project can relieve some of the risk that would otherwise be borne by the County. The log deck and a biomass facility are two proposed solutions to a problem that requires multiple solutions. Both are identified solutions in the Governor's Proclamation dated October 30, 2015. Wood storage is an immediate need, biomass facilities are longer term solutions but necessary to address the public safety risk posed by the dead and dying trees in Mariposa County.

The Mariposa Biomass Project is requesting that the Board of Supervisors approve a letter of support for the grant application and authorize the Board Chair to sign it.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board has approved letters of support in the past on projects that will ultimately benefit the citizens of Mariposa County and approved a similar letter of support for another grant application for Mariposa Biomass Project in June 2015.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not approve a letter of support for the grant application. Individual Board members may write their own letters of support, which may not carry the weight of a support letter endorsed by the entire Board.

Failure to approve and sign the attached letter will decrease the probability of success for the grant application and may well eliminate one solution to the County's ever expanding local disaster which impacts most Mariposa citizens and many visitors to the County.

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed Letter of Support (DOCX)

Mariposa Biomass Project Abstract (DOCX)

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Requested Action Recommended


Mary Hodson, CAO 12/30/2015

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor

SECONDER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

PROJECT TITLE: MARIPOSA BIOMASS PROJECT

LENGTH OF PROJECT: ONE YEAR (JUNE 1, 2016-JUNE 1, 2017)

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$238,000 (Grant Request is \$147,500)

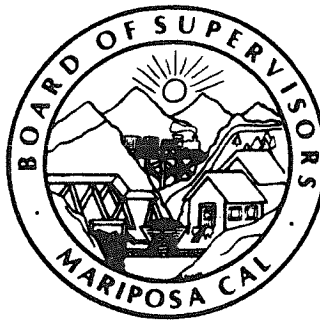
PROJECT ABSTRACT:

This project will complete the work necessary for development of a community biomass energy facility, as well as a log deck, in Mariposa, Calif. This will include completion of site control, site planning and design, acquiring required permitting, technical documentation, CEQA, and completion of a system impact study that will allow the facility to tie into the existing electrical grid. The biomass energy facility will have a capacity of 1-2MW to take advantage of California legislation (SB 1122) that supports renewal biomass energy. The small community-based facility will utilize 16,000 BDT of biomass per year from a 50 mile radius feedstock sourcing area, with 80% from eligible parts of the Stanislaus National Forest, Sierra National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management, according to a fuel availability study completed in August, 2015 by TSS Associates. Forest-sourced biomass would come primarily from areas designated as high fire hazard. The project would generate approximately 15-24 jobs, some of which would be for facility operation and the rest from jobs required to process and transport biomass to the facility.

The project will be managed and directed by a team of experienced professionals from the Mariposa Biomass Project and the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District.

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE
District 2 MERLIN JONES
District 3 MARSHALL LONG
District 4 KEVIN CANN
District 5 JOHN CARRIER



MARY HODSON
County Administrative Officer

RENE LAROCHE
Clerk of the Board

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www.mariposacounty.org/board

January 5, 2016

Larry Swan
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region (R5)
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 95492-1110

Subject: Letter in Support of the Mariposa Biomass Project application for the U.S. Forest Service 2016 Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity

Dear Mr. Swan,

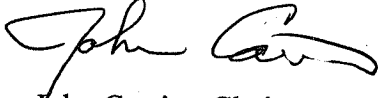
The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Mariposa Biomass Project's 2016 application for Wood to Energy funding for a Mariposa community-scale forest biomass energy facility.

This project is in line with U.S. Forest Service goals of reducing hazardous fuels and improving forest health on National Forest and other lands. The forests in Mariposa County, both public and private, have for some time suffered from an overabundance of feedstock leading to serious fire safety concerns. More recently, the tree mortality disaster, the epicenter of which is right here in Mariposa County, has killed a majority of the pine trees in our forests, thus further amplifying the wildfire danger and public safety concerns. Over the next few years those trees that are not burned in fires will fall, potentially damaging houses and critical infrastructure as well as blocking essential roadways.

The Mariposa Biomass Project can help in the short term by establishing a log deck where many of the bug killed trees can be stored until they can be put to beneficial use. The Mariposa Biomass Project is currently planning a biomass facility to generate not only electricity from the forest biomass, but also biochar. Biochar is a valuable substance that can be used as an agricultural supplement, not only improving crop yield, but also increasing soil carbon, thus helping to reverse climate change. The project is also exploring other uses for biochar as a source of activated carbon, such as water treatment purposes.

This project would help alleviate the risk of wildfires and improve public safety, as well as help finance the cost of healthy forest management and it therefore deserves support. Thank you for considering this grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Carrier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Carrier".

John Carrier, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors