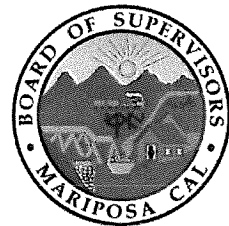


MARIPOSA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors • 209-966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2016-659

MEETING: December 20, 2016

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

RE: Letter of Support for Biomass Project Grant Application

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 secured funding from the U.S. Forest Service, through the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council, for a fuel availability study that was completed in September 2015. The Project also secured a Wood Innovations Grant valued at \$244,080 from the U.S. Forest Service. That grant funds the Project's efforts to obtain required permits and to contract for site preparation and preliminary design work leading to construction of a biomass facility in Mariposa.

The Mariposa Biomass Project is seeking \$5 Million in Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) funds from the California Energy Commission for activities necessary to support design and construction of a 2.2 MW biomass-to-energy conversion facility in Mariposa. When completed, the commercial-scale, woody biomass gasification plant will be capable of accepting and processing forest biomass feedstocks that would otherwise create wildfire and air quality concerns. This facility will provide community and state benefits, including forest ecosystem protection (due to removal of excess forest growth that leads to catastrophic wildfires), watershed protection, air quality and greenhouse gas benefits, local jobs, and renewable power generation to help meet state energy goals.

Mariposa County will bear no responsibility for compliance with the grant since the applicant and fiscal agent for the effort will be the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District.

The Mariposa Biomass Project is requesting that the Board of Supervisors approve a letter of support for the EPIC 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 similar letters of support for other grant applications for Mariposa Biomass Project in June 2015 and January 2016.

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.

ATTACHMENTS:

MBP letter of support BoS 12-16 (DOCX)

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Requested Action Recommended


Mary Hodson, CAO 12/14/2016

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

SECONDER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

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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December 20, 2016

Contracts, Grants, and Loans Office, MS-18
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ref: GFO-15-325 Phase 2 (EPIC Bioenergy Solicitation)
Project Title: Mariposa Biomass Project

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Mariposa Biomass Project's 2016 application for Electric Program Investment Charge funding for a Mariposa community-scale forest biomass energy facility.

This project is in line with CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Park Service and U.S. Forest Service goals of reducing hazardous fuels and improving forest health on forested 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 storage facility where some of the bug kill 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, improving crop yield, and 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, e.g. for water treatment.

This project would help alleviate the risk of wildfires and improve public safety, as well as help finance the cost of healthy forest management. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors urges your support.

Sincerely,

John Carrier, Chair
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors