



Land Use and Natural Resource Committee

Item #17-11-3
Action

October 26, 2017

Specialty Crop Block Grant Application

Issue: SACOG staff is seeking approval to submit a grant proposal to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

Recommendation: That the Land Use & Natural Resources Committee recommend that the SACOG Board authorize staff to submit a full application for the CDFA Specialty Crop Grant program.

Discussion: The CDFA expects that up to \$19 million in block grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be made available this year to increase the competitiveness of specialty crops by creating or expanding markets and forming partnerships. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops. These crops account for 52 percent of U.S. farm gate value according to the USDA and make up much of California's agricultural production.

Staff has developed and submitted a concept proposal and budget for consideration in this round of funding to the CDFA. The proposal is education and partnership focused, targeting ways in which cities and counties can more fully employ rural urban connection strategies in their jurisdictions. The focus will be on the use of specialty crops as an economic strategy. The work will examine best practices and policy considerations that can be used by local governments to connect with the State's California Grown Campaign. The work will build upon and synthesize prior RUCS findings to create an accessible local and regional toolkit for use by city staff and elected officials in a guidebook format.

Concept proposals were due on October 25, 2017. CDFA will announce invitations for full grant proposals in January and applications will be due on February 5, 2018. Staff is seeking approval to submit a full application if the conceptual proposal is accepted. If successful, work on these projects would begin in late 2018.

Approved by:

James Corless
Chief Executive Officer

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