

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Resolution authorizing the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments to Establish a Program of Work to be Known as the “ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program.”

Meeting Date: September 7, 2022

Prepared by: Daniel C. Holler, Town Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Resolution approving a Program of Work to be Known as the “ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Project.”

BACKGROUND:

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) requires the ESCOG to obtain specific authorities from its member agencies to receive funding or conduct certain project work via resolution of the ESCOG Board and secondly by resolution of the member agency boards. Based on exceptional opportunities associated with the Community Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF) program, and in response to input and general direction among member agencies and regional management, the ESCOG Board has adopted a resolution establishing a Program of Work to be known as the ESCOG: Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Project. The ESCOG Board is requesting Town Council adopt the attached resolution empowering the ESCOG to commence the program of work. The resolution adopted by the ESCOG Board is attached as well.

The CERF will provide a \$5,000,000 planning grant for regional economic development planning in the Eastern Sierra subregion, which includes Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties to be focused on economic resilience, equity, and transitioning to carbon neutrality. Once the Eastern Sierra Region’s CERF planning process is complete, the region will be eligible to apply for \$500 million in competitive funding for implementation of the Eastern Sierra Region’s Regional Plan with invitations for project solicitations anticipated to be announced in Winter 2023.

The Sierra Business Council (SBC) submitted an application to serve as the “convener” of the CERF program for the Eastern Sierra subregion. As part of their application, the SBC allocated \$250,000 to the ESCOG to coordinate participation in the CERF for local jurisdictions and community organizations. The ESCOG is unable to receive this funding absent approval of the attached resolution by the Board and all member agencies.

Staff has met with regional managers to ensure these authorities would serve to build economic development capacity for the region and expand and not duplicate the individual efforts of the members agencies. Staff has incorporated the feedback of regional managers into the attached resolution. Specifically, regional management requested the resolution constrain the scope of the ESCOG authorities to receiving funding for and participating in the CERF and CEDS opportunities until such a time that those strategic plans are finalized, at which point the ESCOG shall return to request additional authorities for strategic regional implementation.

Concurrent to these activities, Inyo County is serving as the lead agency to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to include Inyo and Mono Counties and the development of the CEDS is a mandatory prerequisite to access certain EDA funding sources, and the ESCOG can serve to coordinate the implementation of defined elements of the regional CEDS and serve as a funding source for defined EDA or other related grants. The attached resolution also requests authorities for ESCOG to participate in the development of the CEDS regional economic development strategy. Elements of the Town's Destination Resort Community Economic Development Strategy (DRCEDS) will be incorporated into the regional CEDS.

FINANCIAL:

The proposed program of work for ESCOG will not have any direct financial impact on the Town. The funding sources will support ESCOG's efforts and participation in the CERF and CED programs. Town staff time will be committed to the project as we will participate as one of the partner agencies in both areas of work.