



AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Control: 26001446

MEETING DATE: 09/15/2026
LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION: Board of Supervisors
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S): All Districts
SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: OC Public Works
DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S): Amanda Carr, 714-955-0601
Grant Sharp, 714-955-0633

SUBJECT: Approve Retroactive Grant Application and Award for WaterSMART Program

CEO CONCUR

Concur

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW

Approve resolution to form

CLERK OF THE BOARD

DISCUSSION

3 Votes Board Majority

Budgeted: Yes

Current Year Cost: N/A

Annual Cost: N/A

Staffing Impact: No

Sole Source: No

Current Fiscal Year

Funding Source: See Financial Impact

County Audit in Last 3

Revenue: \$124,980

Section

years: No

Levine Act Review

Completed? N/A

Prior Board Action: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Authorize Orange County Public Works, or designee, to retroactively apply for and sign all necessary documents for the United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects – H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program in the amount of \$124,980.
2. Adopt a Resolution to retroactively accept the award of \$124,980 for the United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects – H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program.
3. Authorize the Director of OC Public Works or designee to negotiate and execute a Grant Agreement with the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation, with substantially the same terms and conditions as in the attached Notice of Award, and to approve minor amendments and modifications to the Grant Agreement, provided there is no increase in financial obligations of the County.

SUMMARY:

Retroactive approval of the WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects grant application and award will allow OC Public Works to expand water conservation efforts through implementation of the H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), administers the WaterSMART Program to support projects that improve water conservation, increase water-use efficiency, and strengthen drought resilience.

On January 14, 2025, OC Public Works submitted an application to USBR under the WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects – H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program (Program). The Program seeks to expand the OC Stormwater Program’s existing large landscape turf conversion efforts by providing additional incentive funding and technical assistance to homeowner associations (HOAs) to implement large-scale landscape upgrades to incorporate stormwater retention features in South Orange County.

On March 4, 2026, USBR notified the County of Orange (County) that the application received one of the highest ratings during the competitive review process and is being considered for award of a financial assistance agreement. USBR indicated its intent to award approximately \$124,980 in federal funding for implementation of the Program, subject to completion of federal environmental review, verification of matching funds and execution of a financial assistance agreement.

The total cost for two large landscape turf upgrade projects funded by this award is estimated to be \$264,000. A 50 percent funding match is required by the grant. After the grant award amount (\$124,980) is deducted, the remaining cost (\$139,000) meets the 50 percent match criteria and will be provided by water use efficiency rebates from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (\$100,000), the OC Stormwater Program National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Shared Costs (\$34,000), and program participants (\$5,000).

The two projects funded by this award support numerous County and regional planning efforts, including the South Orange County Water Quality Improvement Plan, South Orange County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, OC Plan Integrated Regional Water Management Program and the County’s Climate Action Plan.

This grant application is coming to the Board of Supervisors retroactively due to administrative oversight during the transition of program management responsibilities. Board approval is requested to retroactively approve the grant application award and authorize execution of the forthcoming grant agreement with USBR.

Compliance with CEQA: The action is not a project within the meaning of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 and is therefore not subject to CEQA, since it does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. The approval of this agenda item does not commit the County to a definite course of action in regard to a project since the proposed action is intended to retroactively approve the grant application and award, and authorize a grant agreement for the Program. This proposed activity is therefore not subject to CEQA. Any future action connected to this approval that constitutes a project will be reviewed for compliance with CEQA.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Revenue associated with the grant is included in Fund 100, Budget Control 034, OC Stormwater Program NPDES Shared Costs FY 2026-27 Budget.

STAFFING IMPACT:

N/A

REVIEWING AGENCIES/DEPARTMENTS:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Grant Application and Award Form

Attachment B - Memo

Attachment C - Grant Application

Attachment D - Award Letter

Attachment E - Resolution

Attachment F - Notice of Award