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Title: ***RESOLUTION - Authorizing submission of a 2022 Urban Community Drought Relief Grant Program application to the California Department of Water Resources for the Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program, and authorizing the Director of Public Utilities or designee to accept grant funds and execute all application and grant agreement documents on behalf of the City of Fresno (Citywide) (Subject to Mayor's Veto)

Sponsors: Department of Public Utilities

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Attachments: 1. Attachment 1 - Resolution.pdf, 2. Attachment 2 - Sample Agreement

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/9/2023	1	City Council	ADOPTED	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: BROCK D. BUCHE, PE, PLS, Director
Department of Public Utilities

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SUBJECT

***RESOLUTION - Authorizing submission of a 2022 Urban Community Drought Relief Grant Program application to the California Department of Water Resources for the Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program, and authorizing the Director of Public Utilities or designee to accept grant funds and execute all application and grant agreement documents on behalf of the City of Fresno (Citywide) (Subject to Mayor's Veto)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council approve a Resolution authorizing submission of a 2022 Urban Community Drought Relief Grant Program application to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for the Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program, and authorizing the Director of Public Utilities or designee to accept grant funds and execute all application and grant agreement documents on behalf of the City of Fresno.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2022, the State of California Legislature allocated \$545 million to DWR to deliver grants for drought relief to urban communities. The City of Fresno (City) Department of Public Utilities (DPU) proposes to utilize available DWR grant funding for the Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program, which will build upon the current Lawn to Garden Rebate program to provide additional rebates and incentives for residential and commercial water customers to replace existing lawns with water-efficient landscapes on a first-come, first-served basis.

BACKGROUND

In the Budget Act of 2021, the State of California allocated \$300 million to the DWR to deliver grants for interim and immediate drought relief to urban communities for multi-benefit projects, which DWR administers via the Urban Community Drought Relief Grant Program (Program). Grants awarded under the Program are intended to provide water to communities that face the loss or contamination of their water supplies, to address immediate impacts on human health and safety, and to protect fish and wildlife resources. An amendment to the Budget Act of 2021 in June 2022 allocated an additional \$545 million to the DWR for the Program.

The City provides potable water supply service to approximately 140,000 residences, businesses, industries, and institutions within a geographic area that extends across approximately 110 square miles. As drought conditions have continued to persist in California, the City has been actively engaged in efforts to maintain the City's water supplies and ensure the reliability of its potable water system.

The Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program (Project) will build upon the current Lawn to Garden Rebate Program to provide additional rebates and incentives for residential and commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) water customers to replace existing lawns with water efficient landscapes on a first-come, first-served basis. During the three-year Project, DPU anticipates completion of approximately 1,250 rebates, replacement of approximately 2,125,000 square feet of turf with water-efficient landscapes, and replacement of approximately 1,250 spray irrigation systems to drip irrigation, resulting in the conservation of an estimated 122 acre-feet per year (AFY) of potable water.

To maximize rebate effectiveness and incentives for customers, DPU recently retained a consultant who is performing a review and evaluation of the current Lawn to Garden Rebate Program, as well as review landscape rebate programs other water agencies' to explore opportunities for further program enhancement. The consultant will make recommendations for revisions to the City's landscape rebate programs including: 1) revisions to rebate structures, including a distinction between residential and CII properties, and rebate amounts; 2) revisions to rebate terms and conditions; 3) revisions to rebate paperwork; and 4) revisions to rebate outreach efforts. Final recommendations from the consultant are forthcoming and will be subject to Council approval.

If Program funds are awarded, DPU will be positioned to offer a larger number of residential and CII water customers the program incentive to convert lawns to water-efficient sustainable landscaping, increasing the City's overall water conservation and drought resilience.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Pursuant to the definition in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15378, this is not a project for the purposes of CEQA.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not implemented because this action does not include a bid or an award of a construction or services contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution will have no impact on the General Fund. Should the grants be awarded, the funds will be accounted for in a separate fund to be designated specifically for the Expanded Lawn to Garden Water Conservation Rebate Program.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Resolution

Attachment 2 - Sample Agreement