



Ventura County SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jim Fryhoff - Sheriff | John Reilly - Undersheriff
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 | 805.654.2385 | VenturaSheriff.org

March 18, 2025

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

Subject: Authorization for the Sheriff to Accept Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration Funds in the Amount of \$50,000 from the 2025 Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program; Approval of and Authorization for the Sheriff to Sign Letter of Agreement #2025-48 (RECOMMENDATION NO. 3 REQUIRES 4/5THS VOTE)

Recommendations:

1. Authorize the Sheriff to accept a Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program award in the amount of \$50,000 from the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration.
2. Approve and authorize the Sheriff to sign Letter of Agreement (LOA) #2025-48. (Exhibit 1)
3. Authorize the Auditor-Controller to process the necessary accounting transactions to increase appropriations and unanticipated revenue (Requires 4/5ths vote):

Increase/Decrease	Budget Division	Account Level	Amount
Increase	2500	Intergovernmental Revenue	\$50,000
Increase	2500	Salaries & Benefits	\$45,000
Increase	2500	Services & Supplies	\$5,000

Fiscal Impact:

	FY 2024-25
Revenues	\$50,000
Costs	\$50,000
Net County Cost	\$0

Funding Source(s): U.S. Dept. of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration

Match Requirement: None

Discussion:

In 1979, the DEA initiated the Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP), which was the only nationwide law enforcement program that exclusively targeted Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) involved in cannabis cultivation. The DCE/SP began its funding of eradication programs in Hawaii and California and by 1982 had rapidly expanded to include programs in 25 states. By 1985, all 50 states were participating in the DCE/SP.

Over the last several years, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit has partnered with the DEA DCE/SP by agreeing to assist in locating and eradicating illicit cannabis plants, as well as investigating and prosecuting numerous DTO's that are involved in the illegal cultivation of marijuana on National Forest lands in Ventura County. In 2024, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit eradicated more than 4,000 illegally cultivated marijuana plants, apprehended two suspects believed to be maintaining illicit grows on National Forest lands at the direction of a DTO, and seized two firearms - one of which was determined to be an assault rifle.

The DTO's gravitate to this area because the gardens are difficult to detect due to the local topography and the fact that growers can camouflage their gardens by planting them among the indigenous vegetation which hampers aerial detection. The increased amount of available water due to plentiful rainfall is another factor which makes our National Forest lands attractive to DTO's. It is believed that, due to these factors, the DTOs will continue to seek sites in Ventura County's National Forest lands for illegal marijuana cultivation.

Illegal marijuana cultivation results in significant resource damage to the environment and causes extensive reclamation efforts by the Forest Service. The DEA has requested to partner with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office by way of the attached Letter of Agreement and will pay federal funds in the amount of \$50,000 for the period of October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025, to defray costs relating to the eradication and suppression of illicit cannabis. These funds are primarily intended for payment of officers' overtime, per-diem costs, helicopter flight time (i.e., fuel costs) and supplies or equipment associated with marijuana eradication. It is our intent to utilize these funds to offset Sheriff's personnel overtime expenses and costs associated with eradication related equipment and supplies.

Strategic Plan:

This item contributes to the County of Ventura's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan in two ways. First, authorization for the Sheriff to accept these funds promotes fiscal responsibility by utilizing alternate funding sources outside of county general funds to maintain or increase the existing high performing public safety services provided by the Sheriff's Office. Second, authorization to accept these funds promotes the overall sustainability of our communities by increasing the Sheriff's ability to preserve and protect our natural environment and resources from the harmful environmental impacts of illegal marijuana cultivation through the eradication and suppression of these operations.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, County Counsel, and the Auditor Controller's Office. If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact Assistant Sheriff Victor Fazio at (805) 383-8785.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Fryhoff', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

James Fryhoff,
Sheriff

Attachment(s):

Exhibit 1 – Letter of Agreement (LOA) #2025-48