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Human Resources Director

October 20, 2015

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
and Ventura County Watershed Protection District  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: **El Niño Preparations – Authorize the Clearance of Watershed Protection District Property in the Santa Clara River Watershed South of Highway 101; Authorize the Allocation of \$104,000 for the Operation of a Winter Warming Shelter and Related Activities (RECOMMENDATION 3 REQUIRES 4/5<sup>th</sup> VOTE)**

Recommendations:

1. Approve the removal of non-natural and non-native materials, including homeless encampments and Arundo donax, from Watershed Protection District property in the Santa Clara River watershed south of the 101 Freeway overcrossing at an estimated total cost of \$370,000.
2. Authorize staff to invite owners of other properties in the subject area to participate, at their own expense and risk, in these removal activities.
3. Approve the allocation of \$104,000 of the \$1,000,000 emergency shelter set-aside funding as the County's contribution for operating the Winter Warming Shelter in the West County for one last season and authorize the Auditor-Controller to establish appropriations as follows (REQUIRES 4/5<sup>th</sup> VOTE):

DECREASE Fund G001 Assigned Fund Balance – Homeless	\$104,000
INCREASE Fund G001 Unit 1050 Other Charges	\$104,000

4. Authorize County staff to work with the cities of Oxnard and Ventura to notify persons encamping on Watershed Protection District property of the District's removal plans and to schedule and arrange for such alternative sheltering options as may be available, including the Winter Warming Shelter at the Ventura Armory.

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

Mandatory:	No
Sources of Funding:	Assigned Fund Balance - Homeless Watershed Protection District Zone 2
Funding Match Required:	No
Impact on other Departments:	Short-term Minimal Impact

Summary of Revenue and Total Costs\*:

FY 2015-16 FY 2016-17

Revenue:

Direct:	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0

Costs:

Direct	\$104,000	\$0
Indirect Costs	Minimal	None
Total Costs	\$104,000	\$0

Net County Cost Incl. Indirect	\$104,000	\$0
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\*Watershed Protection District Zone 2 has sufficient appropriations in the Adopted FY16 budget and thus is not included above.

Current FY 2015-16 Adopted Budget for Special Accounts and Contributions				
	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$49,182,500	\$49,182,500	\$49,182,500	\$0
Revenue	\$8,895,000	\$8,895,000	\$8,895,000	\$0
Net Cost	\$40,287,500	\$40,287,500	\$40,287,500	\$0

Background:

As we head into an anticipated strong El Niño weather pattern the importance of planning for, and anticipating the needs of, those encamping on publicly owned property in the Santa Clara River takes on increasing urgency. As your Board will recall, a comprehensive sweep of the Ventura River was conducted in 2012 in direct response to demands from the Regional Water Quality Control Board's mandates in that watershed.

Despite the lack of similar mandate in the Santa Clara River, there are financial, environmental and social justice reasons for taking immediate action in this area.

A survey conducted earlier this year identified approximately 50 individuals encamping in this area on Watershed Protection District property. The impacts to the environment from lack of sanitation facilities, potentially hazardous materials in the watershed, and danger such materials would pose in the event of rescue operations, not to mention the danger to the individuals themselves, demand that plans and strategies be put into place now to protect human life, protect first responders, and preserve access to future funding in the event claims are filed with FEMA for debris management. Staff is seeking your Board's authorization for the Watershed Protection District to proceed with plans to remove the non-native and non-natural material from its property on parcels south of the 101 Freeway. There are also known established encampments on other properties between this area and the Pacific Ocean; owners of those properties will be invited to participate in these efforts (at their own expense and risk), in the same manner as was previously done in the Ventura River.

In response to your Board's offer to provide flexibility in its matching funds for the development of small year-round short-term shelters, as outlined in the Recalibrated Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness (10YP), our office met with the city managers from Oxnard and Ventura last week. The outcome of that meeting was agreement that, while the warehousing model with night-time sheltering is not the preferred option, an immediate alternate solution is needed. The cities are collaborating to permit temporary housing at the Ventura Armory. With an estimated operating budget of about \$320,000, our office recommended to commit \$104,000 (consistent with the County's commitment of \$1 for every \$2 in other match) from its set-aside funding to support a projected opening date of December 1, 2015.

The District's scheduled activities will be coordinated with the Sheriff's notification of individuals at the encampments and posting of the area, with HSA offering its resources and services, on or about November 17. The date on which the homeless encampments and other materials in the Watershed Protection District's property will have to be removed is projected to be early in December and will be determined during planning meetings with community partners and adjacent cities expected to take place later this month. While some rainfall is expected before December, the Watershed Protection District estimates that (1) such precipitation will not be significant and (2) it is unlikely that stream flows from rainfall in the upper watershed would reach this area by the scheduled date. All participants agree, however, that it is important to get this removal work done as soon as alternate shelter options become available.

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This Board letter has been reviewed by County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have questions regarding this item, please contact Christy Madden, Senior Deputy Executive Officer, at 805 654-2679.

Sincerely,



Christy Madden  
Sr. Deputy Executive Officer



Michael Powers  
County Executive Officer