

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
February 13, 2025

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTANT CONTRACT PHASE 2**

Project No.22-061-01  
Project Manager: Lilly Allen

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$500,000 to augment the Conservancy's previously authorized contract for technical assistance with environmental documentation, permit applications, and project planning to support wildfire resilience project development across the Conservancy's jurisdiction.

**LOCATION:** Statewide.

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [September 22, 2022 Conservancy Staff Recommendation](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an additional five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to augment the contract previously authorized by the Conservancy on September 22, 2022, for a total authorized amount of one million four hundred thousand dollars (\$1,400,000), to hire a contractor who specializes in technical assistance with environmental documentation, permit applications, and project planning to support wildfire resilience project development across the Conservancy's jurisdiction, subject to the conditions of the September 22, 2022 authorization.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
  2. The recommended authorization is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of an additional \$500,000 to Montrose Environmental to augment the contract previously authorized by the Conservancy on September 22, 2022 (Exhibit 2), for a total authorized amount of \$1,400,000, for technical assistance with environmental documentation, permit applications, and project planning to support wildfire resilience project development across the Conservancy's jurisdiction.

The Conservancy identified a need for technical assistance with environmental documentation to support implementation of wildfire resiliency projects. Under the prior authorization, the Conservancy retained a contractor, Montrose Environmental, who has been providing technical assistance to grant recipients and potential grant recipients, including on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, environmental documentation, and permit applications to implement wildfire resiliency projects within the Conservancy's jurisdiction. Currently, Montrose Environmental is completing a California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Project Specific Analysis for a wildfire resilience project and is in conversation with several grant recipients about requests for technical assistance.

Conservancy staff see an increased need for such technical assistance by project partners and grantees. Future technical assistance may relate to shaded fuel breaks, forest health measures, prescribed and cultural burns, mechanical and manual treatments, forest thinning, native plant restoration to improve wildfire resilience, prescribed herbivory (including infrastructure improvements), and other actions designed to improve overall resiliency to wildfire.

### **Site Description:**

The Consultant will provide technical assistance to support projects within coastal watersheds statewide and the nine bay area counties.

### **Contractor Qualifications:**

Montrose Environmental was selected for this contract following State of California guidelines and processes. Montrose Environmental has extensive experience in preparing environmental documentation for compliance with CEQA, and assisting with regulatory permitting, including in connection with wildfire projects, and has demonstrated communication skills. Montrose Environmental has demonstrated success at tasks assigned to them under the contract thus far.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:**

The recommended authorization is consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the September 22, 2022 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

**PROJECT FINANCING**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Coastal Conservancy (previous authorization) | \$900,000          |
| Coastal Conservancy (current authorization)  | \$500,000          |
| <b>Project Total</b>                         | <b>\$1,400,000</b> |

The anticipated source of funding is the Fiscal Year 2023-24 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy for the purpose of wildfire risk reduction (The Budget Act of 2023, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2023 (SB 101), as amended by the budget trailer bill Chapter 38, Statutes of 2023 (AB 102)). The recommended authorization is consistent with this funding source because it will help increase the pace and scale of wildfire resilience projects and ultimately reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The recommended authorization remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation as described in the September 22, 2022 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):**

Consistent with **Goal 1.4 Incorporate Workforce Development in Our Projects**, the recommended authorization will provide technical assistance to support implementation of wildfire resilience projects that often include workforce development through wildland firefighting training opportunities.

Consistent with **Goal 4.2 Wildfire Resilience**, the recommended authorization will provide technical assistance that supports implementation of wildfire resilience projects within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

The project elements have not changed since the September 22, 2022 authorization and remain exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as described in the September 22, 2022 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).