

2015-2016 Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Final Draft Guidelines

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Staff

December 17, 2015

Recommended Action:

Adoption of final draft guidelines for the FY 2015-16 Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program.

With Council approval, staff will begin solicitation of projects, via a competitive process, awarding up to \$40 million in FY 15-16 GGRF funding.



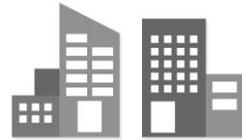
SALC Program Purpose

To avoid increases in GHG emissions associated with conversion of California's irreplaceable croplands and rangelands to urban and rural residential development



Senate Bill 862, Statutes of 2014

“...to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that implement land use,



Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Program



“...and agricultural land preservation practices to support infill and compact development...”

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program



Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Since October 2015 SGC meeting:

- Public workshops in Tulare, Camarillo, and Santa Rosa
- Received written comments on draft guidelines and draft GHG quantification methodology
- Stakeholder follow-up meetings
- Final GHG Quantification Methodology, resulting in revisions to guidelines.
- Considered and incorporated final revisions to guidelines

PROPOSED NEW REVISIONS TO GUIDELINES

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Eligible Project Categories:

- **Agricultural Strategy & Outcomes**
 - Up to \$2.5 million available for this category
 - Grant awards up to \$250,000
 - 5 Eligible Strategy Types

- **Agricultural Conservation Easements**
 - Up to \$37.5 million available for this category
 - No maximum grant award

Demonstrating Risk of Conversion

New threshold criteria apply to Strategy & Outcome projects and Agricultural Conservation Easement projects.

Threshold criteria ensure that projects will provide GHG benefits by establishing risk of conversion

Applicants must demonstrate that ag lands within the project geographic boundary are at risk of conversion. Guidelines present nine options for meeting the threshold requirement

Staff will evaluate data submitted by applicants related to the options to determine what forms of risk apply during the project review phase.

Nine Options for Demonstrating Risk of Conversion

The nine options, described on pages 2-3 of final draft Guidelines, fall under three categories:

- Residential zoning
- Rural residential zoning
- Agricultural zoning

The option by which a project demonstrates conversion risk determines the level of upzoning that will be used in quantifying the project's avoided GHG emissions.

GHG Quantification Methodology

The SALC 2015-16 GHG Quantification Methodology is posted to the California Air Resources Board website at:

www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/quantification.htm

Or via the link provided on the SGC website for the SALC Program

STRATEGY & OUTCOME GRANTS

**Establish Ag Land
Mitigation Program**

**Increased Zoning
Minimum for Designated
Strategic Ag Areas**

**Adoption of Urban
Limit Line**



**Establish Ag
Easement
Purchasing
Program**

**Adoption of Greenbelt and
Implementation Agreement**

Five Strategy & Outcome Types

Strategy Grants: Getting to Outcomes

- Draft guidelines included an administrative requirement for all strategies that would delay reimbursement of strategy work *until success is demonstrated*.
- Noting the requirement may be difficult to meet, staff is proposing new flexibility for those strategies that result in new easements.

Two Reimbursement Options for Strategies: Ag Land Mitigation Program, Ag Easement Purchasing Program, and Greenbelts:

Option 1:

- ✓ Applicant submits a joint application with a new Easement project within the County, or proposed greenbelt, of the proposed strategy.
- ✓ If both are successful and fully executed, Strategy is reimbursed routinely per grant scope.

Option 2: Cover costs of strategy work until first easement in place.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

SALC Agricultural Conservation Easements

Eligible entities with a mission to permanently protect agricultural lands at risk to conversion to non-agricultural uses.

No maximum award, but requires match of 25% of the fair market value of ACEs not located within a Disadvantaged Community, or a match of 10% for ACEs located within a Disadvantaged Community as identified by CalEnviroScreen version 2.0.

PRE-PROPOSAL & FULL APPLICATION PROCESS

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Pre-Proposal Summary (Optional technical review)

Full Application

Technical Review of Proposals

Funding Recommendations to SGC

SALC Estimated Timelines for FY 2015-16 Funds

✓ SALC Lessons Learned Workshop (Sacramento)	August 2015
✓ Stakeholder Meetings on 2015-2015 Draft Guidelines and GHG Quantification Methodology	November 2015
✓ Comments due on Draft Guidelines and GHG Quantification Methodology	November 19, 2015
✓ Revision of Guidelines and GHG Quantification Methodology	Late Fall/Early Winter 2015
Final Guidelines and GHG Quantification Methodology presented to Council for Approval	December 2015
Request for Proposals Released	Late December/ early January 2016
Pre-Proposal Summaries Due (Optional)	February 25, 2016
Complete Applications Due	April 13, 2016
Awards Announced	August 2016

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