June 28, 2018

Subject: California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program

Reporting Period: April 2018 – June 2018

Staff Lead: Monica Palmeira, Strategic Growth Council

Recommended Action:

Approve expenditure of $5 million of FY 2018-2019 funds to support activities of the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program.

Summary:

The California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program supports communities in applying to the California Climate Investments (CCI) funding programs. Created in 2016, the program aims to improve applicants’ capacity to successfully access these funds, particularly those that live in the state’s most disadvantaged communities. In FY 2016-2017, the Strategic Growth Council received $2 million to develop models for technical assistance across a variety of CCI programs. Staff is recommending continuing this program with $5 million in FY 2018-2019 funds and expanding technical assistance opportunities for California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Climate Smart Agriculture programs and the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program.

Background:

The Budget Act of 2015 (Chapter 321, Statutes of 2015) appropriated $500,000 to SGC for a pilot technical assistance program for the Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program. Staff contracted with three regional technical assistance teams to provide direct application assistance to select disadvantaged community applicants. A proportion of funds were also directed to invest in capacity building activities for the AHSC program.

AB 1613 (Chapter 370, Statutes of 2016) appropriated $2.0 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for SGC to provide technical assistance to disadvantaged communities. This technical assistance funding is intended for a broad range of assistance efforts to increase the capacity of applicants in disadvantaged communities to successfully compete for California Climate Investment (CCI) program funds.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed the “Funding Guidelines for Agencies that Administer California Climate Investments” (Funding Guidelines) to provide guidance on the implementation of programs. The Funding Guidelines include guidance on maximizing benefits to disadvantaged communities, ensuring funded projects meet common and specific community needs, performing technical assistance and community outreach to promote program access and participation, and avoiding substantial burdens to communities, such as displacement of low-income residents and businesses, or increased exposure to toxics or other health risks.
Health and Safety Code Section 39719 (b)(1)(c) provides a continuous appropriation from the GGRF to SGC for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program, appropriating twenty percent of the annual proceeds of the fund. The Funding Guidelines allow for the funding of technical assistance for the purpose of implementing CCI programs, and $5 million from the continuous appropriation shall be used for continuing the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program.

**California Climate Investments Technical Assistance (CCI TA) Program**

As CCI implementing agencies and staff continue to expand outreach efforts and improve program accessibility, there is a clear recognition amongst state agencies and stakeholders that lower-resourced communities still face impediments in securing funds from these competitive programs. The CCI TA Program will improve access CCI programs by helping under-resourced applicants access the funds to transition to climate-smart communities.

**CCI TA Program Goals & Structure**

*Direct Assistance* - Increase the number of successful applications from disadvantaged and low-income communities to CCI programs by providing direct assistance in preparing applications and quantifying greenhouse gas reductions.

*Capacity Building* - Strengthen the capacity of disadvantaged and low-income communities in identifying potential projects, creating cross-sector partnerships, and finding appropriate CCI programs to meet community needs.

*Integrating CCI Programs* - Align technical assistance efforts to facilitate an understanding of the full suite of programs available under the CCI umbrella and provide the services necessary to create multi-faceted projects that integrate more than one CCI program.

Each California Climate Investments program has its own set of goals and intended outcomes, meaning specific technical expertise is often required. In order to provide assistance that is tailored to each program, the SGC has divided resources amongst many of the agencies whose programs have funding cycles in FY 2017-2018. In many cases, technical assistance is provided through a partnership between state agencies and outside organizations with expertise in each program’s focus. The SGC intends to continue these partnerships in FY 2018-2019, and explore potential new partnerships with administering agencies depending on program needs. A description of each of the participating CCI programs is listed below.

**Table 1: CCI TA Program Activities**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>CCI TA Program Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CA State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) | **Active Transportation Program (ATP)**  
Localized assistance to five (5) disadvantaged communities to prepare bike lane/sidewalk projects, cultivate partnerships between community and local jurisdictions, and apply to ATP and/or various CCI funding sources.  
**Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)**  
Assistance to five (5) TIRCP awardees, and coordination with local community based organizations, in preparing key transportation and transit station access provisions that serve disadvantaged communities.  
**Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP)**  
Conduct twelve (12) statewide convenings to educate communities on formula-based transportation funding and conduct strategic discussion on LCTOP projects that meet community-identified needs. |
| Community Services & Development (CSD) | **Community Solar**  
Phase I – Community engagement sessions focused on partnership development to prepare for future solar projects. Phase II - Assistance in implementing community solar that addresses community needs. |
| CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) | **State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program (SWEEP)**  
Conduct 13 workshops on application to operations that would not typically apply.  
**Healthy Soils Inventive Program (HSIP)**  
Conduct 28 workshops and provide technical experts to assist applicants in preparing applications to Healthy Soils program.  
**Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP)**  
Conduct workshops and provide technical expertise to assist in preparing applications to AMMP program.  
**Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP)**  
Work with partners to provide project consultation for stakeholders; use administrative costs to provide application assistance workshops |
| Strategic Growth Council (SGC)     | **Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC)**  
Direct application assistance to over 30 applicants and capacity building activities directed at disadvantaged communities to prepare competitive AHSC applications.  
**Transformative Climate Communities (TCC)**  
Project development and application preparation services to develop TCC concept and full applications, as well as assistance with implementation of the project. |
Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC), administered by the SGC and implemented by the Department of Conservation, utilizes Cap-and-Trade proceeds to protect agricultural lands at risk of development.

This proposal will include a technical assistance component to extend services to potential applicants of the SALC program. Services may consist of application assistance, project development, capacity building with local farmers and land trusts, and greenhouse gas quantification.

Climate Smart Agriculture: California Department of Food and Agriculture and the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR)

Building off of lessons learned from the CDFA technical assistance work as part of the broader CCI TA Technical Assistance Program, as well as additional CDFA technical assistance efforts, there is a need to expand and encourage the adoption of science-based climate smart farming and ranching practices across the state.

This proposal aims to build a co-branded program that is distributed across the state and focused on implementing on-farm solutions to mitigate climate change impacts and contributions such as soil health, nutrient management, irrigation management, on-farm composting and manure management.

The program would be shared by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). The program would assemble a cohort of UC ANR Community Education Specialists that are located throughout the state. The cohort is coordinated by two (2) to four (4) UC ANR Advisors who conduct research on implementation of climate smart farming and ranching practices, including healthy soils, therefore serving as a conduit between discovery and implementation for this co-branded program. The coordination is intended to provide a strong linkage between the two agencies and amongst the cohort team such that all parties are moving toward common goals and learning from each other along the way. Members of the cohort will be located within UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) offices in the counties identified, above, pending approval from the appropriate UCCE County Directors.

The proposed roles and responsibilities of the Farm Advisors and the Community Education Specialists are outlined below and are intended to bridge technical expertise and community relationships to being solutions to practice.
**Farm Advisor**

- Work with liaisons and supervise Community Education Specialists in order to provide a coordinated team and work plan across the state with common goals and metrics
- Encourage two-way communication such that field discussions inform research efforts and vice versa
- Maintain strong communications among the Climate Smart Agriculture team and seek opportunities to engage relevant members of the UC ANR network
- Conduct relevant research that leads to opportunities to test discoveries related to climate smart agriculture at farm scale
- Inform and educate the Climate Smart team members about new research that holds promise in California
- Seek opportunities to implement new research in on-farm settings
- Develop and implement Climate Smart Agriculture train-the-trainer programs
- Document successes and complete reporting requirements as needed for the program

**Community Education Specialists**

- Serve as the primary technical assistant specialist responsible for assisting farmers and ranchers in California completing quantification methodologies and applications for submission to California’s Climate Smart Agriculture incentive programs
- Be the primary interface between new research and management practices that could be added to the incentive programs at CDFA
- Through the Advisor member(s) of the team, interface closely with scientists conducting research at the University of California to understand Climate Smart Agriculture: soil health, compost management and irrigation and nitrogen fertilizer efficiency management practices
- Engage on efforts to assist farmers and ranchers in voluntarily implementing Climate Smart Agriculture, including soil health, compost management and irrigation and nitrogen fertilizer efficiency management practice to mitigation GHGs and adapt to climate change impacts such as droughts while maintaining the high environmental quality standards established in the state
- Provide technical assistance in partnership with local coalitions, when available, to growers on irrigation and nutrient management reporting requirements established by the water boards.
- Maintain excellent working relationships with the agricultural community including farmers and ranchers and other state, university and federal agency scientists
- Act as a subject matter expert on proven Climate Smart Agriculture management practices highlighted in CDFA OEFI’s Climate Smart Agriculture incentive programs

**Next Steps:**

- SGC will work with CCI Programs, Department of Conservation, CDFA and stakeholders to identify the nature, scope and funding amounts of technical assistance needs by program.
- Staff will also identify existing mechanisms for developing standard agreements and contracts to engage in third party technical assistance appropriate for each program.
- Staff will prioritize CCI programs which have high potential for technical assistance needs: significant disadvantaged community investments, newer programs, and application periods open in the latter half of 2018.
- Some portion of the funds will be for direct technical assistance, partnership and capacity building, and application/project development.
- Staff will solicit proposals from third party technical assistance providers in the Fall of 2018.