

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Expenditure Record

Strategic Growth Council
Agricultural Land Access Technical Assistance Partners

Authorizing legislation:

Created by Senate Bill (SB) 862 (Chapter 36, Statutes of 2014), the broader Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program is comprised of two specific components: the AHSC Program, and the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program. The Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) AHSC Program focuses on increasing accessibility of affordable housing, employment centers, and key destinations via low carbon transportation options. Technical assistance funded through Agricultural Land Access Technical Assistance Partners local assistance contracts will expand secure access to land in California for producing food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources. By increasing capacity for long-term agricultural land stewardship, these contracts can increase access to California's climate-smart agriculture and conservation programs and reduce the risk of land conversion, thereby assisting AHSC in achieving GHG emissions reductions and co-benefits with an emphasis on investments that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Element (1) A description of each expenditure proposed to be made by the administering agency pursuant to the appropriation.

Agency that will administer funding:

- Strategic Growth Council

Amount of proposed expenditure and appropriation reference:

- Per Health and Safety Code 39719(b)(1)(c), 20 percent of the annual auction proceeds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) is continuously appropriated to the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) to the SGC for the broader AHSC Program.
- The 20 percent appropriation supports local assistance programs as detailed in SB 862, which created the broader AHSC Program. In October 2022, the Council approved reserving a portion of these local assistance funds to support SGC's projects related to agricultural land equity.
- This Expenditure Record specifically addresses funds for two Agricultural Land Access Technical Assistance Partner local assistance contracts. An Expenditure Record for the AHSC Program is established separately. The total expenditure for these contracts is \$1.25 million (two contracts of up to \$500,000 each; \$250,000 for administrative costs). This is a portion of a total allocation of \$2.25 million from the

SGC in October 2022 to support SGC's Agricultural Land Equity Initiative through research, technical assistance, pilot projects, or personnel.

Estimated amount of expenditures for administering agency administrative costs

- The total expenditure includes \$250,000 for State Operations costs.

Identify how any interest earned on appropriated funds will be used, including any interest earned by third-party administrators

- Interest earned on appropriation, if any, will be used to fund additional projects.

If applicable, identify laws or regulations that govern how funds will be used

- AB 1532 (Pérez, Chapter 807, Statutes of 2012), Senate Bill (SB) 535 (de León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012), SB 1018 (Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Chapter 39, Statutes of 2012), SB 862 (Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Chapter 36, Statutes of 2014), and AB 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016) provide the general framework for how the auction proceeds will be administered to further the purposes of AB 32.

Continuation of existing Expenditure Record

- This is a new program that does not have an existing Expenditure Record.

Project Type(s)

- Capacity building
- Technical assistance

Describe the projects and/or measures that will be eligible for funding

- SGC will establish two Land Access Technical Assistance Partner local assistance contracts in coordination with the overarching goals of AHSC and SALC. One contract will support technical assistance for California Native American Tribes and Tribal land stewards, and the other contract will support technical assistance for historically underserved farmers and ranchers, as defined in H.R., the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. Both contracts aim to improve secure access to agricultural land in California for producing food, fiber, medicine, or cultural resources.
- Agricultural Land Access Technical Assistance Partners will complete the following tasks to support secure access to land in California for producing food, fiber, medicine, or cultural resources:
 - Provide customized technical assistance to understand and address unique land access needs.
 - Potential technical assistance focus areas:
 - Land identification and assessment
 - Financing plans and funding applications
 - Land access agreements and legal navigation
 - Business and governance planning
 - Regulatory and permitting support
 - Administration and coordination with SGC including regular progress reports and a final evaluation.

Intended recipients

- The following entities are eligible for these local assistance contracts:
 - Community-based organizations
 - Non-profit or non-governmental organizations
 - Special districts
 - California Native American Tribes

Program structure and process for selecting projects for funding

- Allocation of two local assistance contracts based on the administering agency's staff's evaluation of the best-qualified partners.
- Expectations for contractor skills and experience include:
 - Demonstrated experience providing technical assistance to California Native American Tribes or historically underserved farmers and ranchers in California with a focus on land access and production of food, fiber, medicine, or cultural resources.
 - Demonstrated experience and expertise with the following:

- Identifying needs and gaps for diverse participants and developing tailored roadmaps or action plans.
- Providing flexible, customized support that responds to unique priorities and capacity constraints.
 - Ability to provide regular progress reports and final evaluations.
- Selection process: SGC hosts informational webinars and invites eligible organizations to submit an Interest Form. SGC meets with interested parties and asks a predetermined set of questions in each meeting to assess qualifications. SGC staff select contractors based on these qualification assessment meetings.

Element (2) A description of how a proposed expenditure will further the regulatory purpose of and contribute to achieving and maintaining greenhouse gas emission reductions pursuant to Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code. Alternatively or additionally, provide a description of how a proposed expenditure will improve climate change adaptation and resiliency, or environmental quality and public health of California's communities.

Describe how expenditures will facilitate the achievement of GHG emission reductions, or improve climate adaptation and resiliency, or environmental quality and public health in the State. Additionally, describe how these expenditures may be consistent with the Investment Plan and Scoping Plan.

- This program facilitates future GHG reductions by facilitating long-term stewardship of California's agricultural lands. By providing technical assistance to establish secure, long-term access to agricultural land, the program enables producers to adopt and maintain sustainable land management practices. Stable tenure also enables participation in programs like the Healthy Soils Program, which directly reduce GHG emissions through carbon sequestration and improved soil health. Long-term stewardship also supports the conservation of agricultural land, thereby reducing risk of conversion and avoiding increases in VMT and energy consumption, among other impacts of land conversion.

Explain when GHG emission, adaptation, resiliency, environmental quality, and/or public health benefits are expected to occur and how they will be maintained.

- These funds have been allocated for expenditure by the SGC for advancing equitable and secure access to agricultural land in California. These contracts do not result in direct GHG emission reductions; rather, they support capacity building through technical assistance that will increase recipients' capacity to securely and sustainably steward agricultural lands and access other grant monies that facilitate their participation in programs and activities that meet the State's climate and equity goals. As such, SGC will track and report on the kinds of projects and initiatives that are the result of these contracts.

Element (3) A description of how the administering agency considered the applicability and feasibility of other non-greenhouse gas reduction objectives of Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code.

Describe expected community co-benefits that occur as a result of activities that facilitate the achievement of GHG emission reductions, or improve climate adaptation and resiliency, or environmental quality and public health in the State.

- Technical assistance that supports secure access to agricultural land provides numerous co-benefits. Examples of these benefits include, but are not limited to:
 - Economic benefits (e.g., business development opportunities; retention of local jobs and agricultural revenue; food production for local, national, and/or international markets).
 - Environmental conservation values (e.g., carbon sequestration potential via management practices).
 - Public health (access to affordable, nutritious foods).
 - Increases in local food production, promoting food security and resilience, reductions in food waste, and a greater understanding of agriculture's importance among both urban and rural Californians.
 - Climate resilience (e.g., maintaining working lands that buffer extreme weather impacts, reduce wildfire risk through active management, and support drought-adaptive practices).

How the project will support other objectives of AB 32 and related statutes

- The Agricultural Land Access Technical Assistance contracts further the purposes of AB 32 and related statutes by investing in technical assistance that advances secure agricultural land access, thereby increasing the capacity for responsible stewardship of agricultural lands in ways that will facilitate GHG emissions reductions.
- These contracts help maximize additional environmental and economic co-benefits for California, compliment the State efforts to improve air quality, support public and private investment towards the most disadvantaged communities in California, and contribute to climate adaptation and resiliency.

Explain strategies the administering agency will use to place an emphasis on maximizing benefits to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities and households.

- Contractors must demonstrate experience with providing tailored and effective technical assistance to 1) California Native American Tribes and Tribal land stewards or 2) historically underserved farmers and ranchers as defined in H.R.2, Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018.

- Contractors will be selected based on their experience and readiness to work with disadvantaged communities, Tribes, and lower-resourced community-based organizations in ways that are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

Percentage of total funding that will be expended for projects that are located in and benefit priority populations¹ per CARB guidance

- SB 862 establishes the target of expending 50 percent of the overall AHSC Program (AHSC and SALC) allocated to the SGC for projects that are located in and benefiting disadvantaged communities. These contracts are a small portion of those funds.
- AB 1550 priority populations include residents of: (1) census tracts identified as disadvantaged by CalEPA, (2) census tracts identified as low-income, and (3) households identified as low-income. Investments that are eligible to be counted toward AB 1550 investment minimums for projects within and benefitting disadvantaged communities would also count toward meeting the SB 862 set-aside described above.
- Land Access Technical Assistance Partners will report to SGC on the location of TA recipients to identify the percentage of funds that are located in and benefit priority populations.

Describe the benefits to Priority Populations per CARB guidance

- Funds technical assistance for priority populations that increases their capacity to obtain, improve, and retain the skills and knowledge needed to participate in and benefit from statewide public or other grant moneys for climate change mitigation, adaptation, or environmental justice projects.
- Increases food access for priority populations through supporting secure access to agricultural land, thereby facilitating Tribal land stewards' and historically underserved producers' participation in regular farmer's markets, donations to food banks or distribution centers serving residents of these communities or low-income households.

¹ Priority populations include residents of: (1) communities identified as disadvantaged by California Environmental Protection Agency per SB 535; (2) communities identified as low-income per AB 1550; or (3) a low-income household per AB 1550. See Section VII.B Funding Guidelines for more information on the definitions of priority populations.

Explain how the administering agency will avoid potential substantial burdens to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities or, if unknown, explain the process for identifying and avoiding potential substantial burdens

- SGC will apply existing guidance on reducing burdens and require contractors to report any identified financial, administrative, or participation barriers. SGC will review contractor work plans for accessibility, cultural competence, and strategies such as translation services, flexible scheduling, and accessible meeting formats.
- SGC will select contractors with demonstrated experience and trusted relationships in disadvantaged communities, evaluating their burden reduction strategies and feedback processes to ensure technical assistance- is delivered without creating substantial burdens for priority populations.

Element (4) A description of how the administering agency will document the result achieved from the expenditure to comply with Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 35800) of the Health and Safety Code. Alternatively or additionally, provide a description of how the administering agency will document improvements to climate change adaptation and resiliency, or environmental quality and public health of California communities resulting from the expenditure.

How the administering agency will track/report progress to make sure projects are implemented per requirements in statute and CARB guidance

- SGC will require contractors to provide a list of technical assistance recipients and provide regular updates on activities during the contract period as well as a final report. If a contractor does not perform in accordance with contract requirements, the recipient will be subject to the remedies for non-performance, as identified in the administering agency's agreement.
- Progress will be reported pursuant to CARB's Funding Guidelines for technical assistant and capacity building projects.

Describe the approach that will be used to document GHG emission reductions, or adaptation, resiliency, environmental quality, and/or public health benefits, and/or other benefits before and after project completion

- SGC will work with CARB to develop a methodology to qualitatively assess how technical assistance provided through these contracts will facilitate GHG emission reductions and co-benefits.

Describe the approach that will be used to document how expenditures place an emphasis on disadvantaged communities or low-income communities or households.

- The administering agency will prioritize contractors with demonstrated experience providing technical assistance to disadvantaged or low-income communities or households.

Type of information that will be collected to document results, consistent with CARB guidance

- SGC will collect any necessary data to document GHG emission reductions in accordance with CARB's Funding Guidelines, quantification methodology and other guidance. This may include but is not limited to information on:
 - Project geographic area;
 - Assistance providers;
 - Recipients of the assistance;
 - Other project benefits or results; and
 - Project accomplishments, including benefits to Priority Communities.

How the administering agency will report on program status

- SGC will provide regular updates on expenditures, status, location, and benefits in reports prepared according to CARB's guidance. At a minimum, the reports will include expenditure amounts, estimates of future GHG emission reductions, and information on applicable co-benefits.