



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: HEALTH

File #: 24-515

Board Meeting Date: 6/25/2024

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Louise F. Rogers, Chief, San Mateo County Health
Tamarra Jones, Director, Public Health Policy & Planning

Subject: **Measure K:** Grant Agreement with the San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group for providing emergency response, disaster preparation, and evacuation aid

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Adopt a resolution authorizing a grant agreement with the San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group for providing emergency response, disaster preparation and evacuation aid for the large/farm animal-owning community for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.

BACKGROUND:

Measure K is the half-cent general sales tax initially approved by the San Mateo County voters in November 2012 and extended through November 2016 for a total of thirty years. In response to Board direction, staff gathered community input regarding priorities for the allocation of **Measure K** funds. Staff collected feedback from Community Based Organizations, County departments and conducted a countywide survey and listening sessions to obtain resident input. At the October 3, 2023, **Measure K** study session, staff presented a report produced by InterEthnica, summarizing the results of the surveys, and listening sessions which provided valuable input for the Board.

On October 17, 2023, after considering the County's needs and community input, this Board finalized and approved the following priority areas for FY 2024-25 **Measure K** funding: Children, Families, and Seniors; Housing and Homelessness; and Emergency Preparedness. Mental Health is a component of each priority area rather than a stand-alone item. In addition to the approval of the priority areas, this Board authorized the County Executive to develop and proceed with a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process to obtain applications for funding within the approved priority areas and subcategories identified by the Board.

On March 27, 2024, this Board approved recommended applications received pursuant to the NOFO and authorized the County Executive to negotiate agreements with applicants, to be returned to this Board for approval. By this action, the application of San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation

Group was approved for an award of **Measure K** funds under the emergency response, disaster preparation, and evacuation aid for the large/farm animal-owning community for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.

The San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group (SMC LAEG) a non-profit group, serves all of San Mateo County through the emergency response, disaster preparation, and disaster evacuation aid of its large/farm animal-owning community. SMC LAEG relieves pressure from first responding agencies with its knowledge, expertise, and equipment for large/farm animals.

SMC LAEG is activated by the San Mateo County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) or other first responders to provide on-call expertise on large animal handling in case of emergencies (traffic accidents involving trailers and other emergencies) and in case of disasters (flood, fire, earthquake, etc.). SMC LAEG works closely with the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS) during disasters and emergencies involving large/farm animals.

SMC LAEG has assisted other counties with Mutual Aid, where SMC LAEG could be dispatched anywhere from a few days to a week.

Most recently, SMC LAEG responded to a small fire in San Gregorio, where 14 horses were evacuated, and three beach rescues in Half Moon Bay. During the 2020 CZU fire, the team evacuated and cared for 1,541 animals, including a camel, cattle, pigs, horses, donkeys, ponies, chickens, llamas, sheep, goats, turkeys, peacocks, and a few dogs. SMC LAEG was called out to be on standby for the Edgewood fire. The most recent rescue was for two horses in a horse trailer over the cliff in Sam McDonald Park.

DISCUSSION:

SMC LAEG a non-profit group, relies heavily on donations and grants to sustain their operations and serve the community effectively.

Currently, the organization has \$9,000 available for expenses. However, in order to effectively plan and execute their programs, they request **Measure K** funding to allow them to procure necessary items and allocate resources efficiently throughout the year for disaster response.

During disasters, assistance with evacuating large/farm animals is essential to County residents as they value their animals yet are often unprepared for disasters and other emergencies. Specialized transport and holding areas for large/farm animals are challenging to arrange in emergencies. Most large animal owners do not even own a trailer to transport/evacuate their animals. Without effective strategies, people cannot safely evacuate or shelter in place, putting themselves and first responders at risk. In response, SMC LAEG is activated to provide evacuation, shelter, care, and other aid to these large animals.

Existing emergency plans focus on the evacuation and shelter provision for people, yet often ignore the need to evacuate large animals/farm animals. Therefore, to increase preparedness, this **Measure K** funding will allow SMC LAEG to provide emergency education workshops for the handling and evacuating of large animals and site inspections for large-animal or farm animal owners. These workshops and inspections include planned evacuation plans, preparation of "go-boxes", and guides on how to shelter in place safely. Resources for animal owners are also available on the SMC LAEG website.

Additionally, SMC LAEG trains and retains a group of disaster and large-animal-handling volunteers. SMC LAEG also has a Memorandum of Understanding with licensed veterinarians to provide aid during disasters and other emergencies.

The County Attorney’s Office has reviewed and approved the proposed agreement and resolution as to form.

It is anticipated that SMC LAEG will train at least 20 first responders annually, in order to increase the preparedness of first responding agencies, starting within the first year of funding.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

Measure	FY 2024-2025 Projected	FY 2025-2026 Projected
Number of first responders trained, to increase the preparedness of first responding agencies	≥20 first responders	≥20 first responders

EQUITY IMPACT:

This policy will positively impact the Latinx community in the County by broadening engagement through collaboration and targeted outreach because this community is unaware of the services that SMC LAEG provides across the County during a disaster.

Volunteers engaged the Latinx community during the 2020 CZU fire when animals needed to be evacuated. However, many Latinx community members were concerned about their immigration status and how asking for help could affect them or their families.

Volunteers have identified the following additional resources needed to mitigate negative impacts and/or to advance equitable outcomes:

- Broaden engagement through collaboration and targeted outreach with the Latinx community within the first year of funding,
- Engage in an ongoing contract for telephone translation service and ensure that all field personnel have access to language translation services within the first two years of funding and

Translate critical materials, information, into the top three languages spoken in San Mateo County within the three years of funding. One language will be selected for each year and reported out to the County of San Mateo

FISCAL IMPACT:

The term of the agreement is July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. The amount of the agreement is not to exceed \$300,000 for the three-years term and will be funded through **Measure K** funds. The **Measure K** funds will be included in the PHPP FY 2024-25 Recommended Budget under Non-Departmental Services but will be transferred to San Mateo County Health, Animal Control & Licensing budget during the September Revisions budget cycle.