

FY 21/22 Cannabis Tax Revenue Funding for Fire District Sustainability

Proposed Funding Guidelines

The Cannabis Tax Citizen's Oversight Committee and Cannabis Tax Ad Hoc Subcommittee have recommended that the Board allocate \$500,000 in one-time cannabis tax revenues for funding activities that:

- Improve fiscal sustainability for rural fire districts (increase long-term revenues / decrease long-term costs), and
- directly assist with immediate wildfire season response and safety needs

This proposed funding will be considered by the full Board of Supervisors for approval at the September 28, 2021 budget hearing. Staff recommends that the Fire Sustainability Ad-hoc Committee clarify guidelines over use of the funds and further suballocate these revenues as follows.

Long-Term Revenue Stability Proposal **\$300,000**

The Fire Sustainability Ad Hoc Committee has expressed a preference for using a portion of the cannabis tax funding allocation for the purpose of reviewing and updating benefit assessments (BA) and associated fees for the fire protection districts. Staff recommends that the Committee set aside \$300,000 of the allocation for the purpose of funding the update to the benefit assessments/fees. The representatives from the Yolo County Fire Chiefs' Association have expressed support for this specific proposal. Staff have informally reached out to several firms and peer fire districts to seek rough estimates for the anticipated cost of updating benefit assessments/fees for up to 15 fire protection districts and have obtained a range of \$200,000 - \$300,000 in costs associated with this work. Should this proceed, competitive bidding would occur to select the provider offering the best value.

Immediate Wildfire Season and Safety Needs **\$200,000**

Staff recommends that the Committee allocate the remaining \$200,000 for use in reimbursing the fire protection districts with immediate wildfire season needs. These funds may not be used for long-term staffing, apparatus replacement (however, repair of apparatus deemed critical is acceptable), or deferred maintenance/capital improvements. Each fire protection district may apply for a maximum of \$50,000 in one-time funding. Funding requests shall be prioritized by each districts' financial status and demonstrated needs. The Committee shall prioritize those districts that cannot meet these immediate safety needs with their own resources.

Authorized expenditures may include, but are not limited to:

- PPE's, turnouts, SCBA's, and similar equipment / supplies
- One-time volunteer/staff incentive programs to ensure adequate staff are on-call (per diem/on-call pay)
- Mutual aid/operating agreements that ensure improved response time and/or staffing is available (legal fees, staff support, etc.)
- Critical equipment repair and other similar items

All expenditures shall be pre-approved by the County Administrator, or his/her designee, prior to authorization for reimbursement.